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KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

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NORMAN A. GOODE
VOL. 37

THE CREATIVE CHRIST

A STUDY OF THE INCARNATION IN TERMS OF MODERN THOUGHT

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
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THE CREATIVE CHRIST

A STUDY OF THE INCARNATION IN TERMS OF MODERN THOUGHT

BY

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Author of "The Apostles' Creed Today," "God's Responsibility for the War," etc.

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1922

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PRINTING COMPANY
NEW YORK CITY

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TO MY WIFE

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"In case either of said offices are vacant the others may nominate the lecturer."

Under this trust the Reverend Edward S. Drown, D.D., Professor of Systematic Divinity in the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, was appointed to deliver the lectures for the year 1921.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Christ for To-day	13
II.	Divine and Human	39
III.	What is the Incarnation ?	68
IV.	The Uniqueness of Christ	103
V.	The Incarnate Life	133
Index		165

THE CREATIVE CHRIST

THE CREATIVE CHRIST

CHAPTER I

THE CHRIST FOR TO-DAY

I

That Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day and forever means that He is the Man of the ages. And, if so, then He is the Man for every age. There is in Him that which can appeal to and satisfy the thoughts and hopes and aspirations of every period of human experience.

That Jesus Christ is always the same does not, therefore, mean that He can always be apprehended in the same way, or that His value and meaning for human life can always be understood and expressed in the same terms. His greatness eludes any complete human understanding. The best that any age can do is to make Him real for that age, and then to hand on to new ages the ever recurring task of understanding Him anew, as human life changes and as new problems call for new solutions.

Such has always been the proper task of Christian theology. Its subject is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. But theology is always changing because life changes, and therefore that revelation must constantly be reinterpreted. Every true theology must be at once conservative and progressive. It must be conservative in that it seeks to conserve the value and meaning of that revelation. But it must also be progressive, or, perhaps better expressed, contemporaneous, in that it seeks to understand the revelation in accordance with the life of its own time, and to apply its

meaning to the thoughts and problems of that time. We sometimes forget that those whom later ages have rightly regarded as champions of orthodoxy were often in their own times innovators, as they sought to put the old truth into new and living form. Athanasius sought for a new expression of the old truth, for only by that new expression could the old truth stand. To have been content with the old formula would have been to sacrifice the old truth. Augustine in the fifth century faced a world crumbling to ruin, as our world has crumbled in the twentieth century. He saw that the City of God must be built anew, armed with new defences and ready for new conflicts. Aquinas brought together in the thirteenth century a veritable *Summa* of the thoughts and problems of his own age. Luther and Calvin faced a new world, and each in his own way tried to meet the issues of his own time. All these men sought to conserve the old by giving it new expression. They sought to see Jesus, not only as He had been for the past, but as He was for the present. To act on their example is not to abide satisfied with their results, it is to walk farther along the path they trod. To be true to the Fathers is to follow not their formulas but their faith.

There are two false attitudes toward the thought of the past. One such is to regard that thought as a finality beyond which we cannot go. But that is to be untrue to the lesson which the past itself has to teach, the lesson taught us by men who were thinkers for their own time, and who dared to follow thought into untrodden fields. And the other false attitude is to disregard the past, and to try to do our own thinking independently of what has been thought before. But that again is to lose the lesson that history has to teach, it is to fail to benefit by the experience of mankind. If we are to understand the present, we must

know the past, know it as a living thing, and from its life we shall learn the lessons for our life to-day. We shall be true to the Christian thought of the past if we try to make Christ real for ourselves.

II

To make Christ real for ourselves is our task. And that task can best be approached by a consideration of what we mean by the belief in Christ, and of what is the value of that belief. Christian belief can best be understood by an appreciation of what it really is, by approaching it from inside rather than from outside. Theoretical arguments for belief in Christ can have little weight apart from an understanding of what that belief is. Indeed it would seem impossible to prove that any belief is true unless we know what the belief is concerning which we are arguing. All truths which touch the depths of life have self-convincing power. If they cannot commend themselves by their own intrinsic nature, it is little use to buttress them from outside. Coleridge maintained that the proof for the inspiration of Holy Scripture is that it *finds you.*[1] So it must be with the truth about Christ. He commends Himself by what He is. And so it must be with every theory, every doctrine, about Christ. We cannot prove that such doctrine is true apart from a study of what it is. If we are to make Christ real for ourselves, we must seek to interpret the truth about Him in a way that will commend itself to our own thoughts, and that will satisfy our needs and solve our problems.

I purpose then to discuss the meaning of the belief in

[1] "In short whatever *finds* me, bears witness for itself that it has proceeded from a Holy Spirit." *Letters on the Inspiration of the Scriptures.* No. I.

Christ, and to try to express that meaning in terms that are ours, rather than in terms that belong to the past. Such an attempt may indeed be deemed presumptuous. Yet presumption of that sort is necessary on the part of anyone who undertakes to discuss the things of God and of Christ. Of course the task is too great for me. But that is no reason for refusing to undertake it, unless every task that is worth while is to be refused. And if what I have to say is of any worth at all, it must be because it is in accord with the spirit and the need of our own time.

And it cannot be denied that the interpretation which I have to give is a personal, an individual, one. It is the attempt to state the truth as it appears to me. I do not see how that responsibility can be avoided. There is no good reason why anyone should try to state what he believes to be truth, unless that truth has not only passed through his own mind, but has become in a real sense his own. It is not only undesirable, it is impossible, to avoid the personal equation. Let the exegete of Holy Scripture be as honest as he may, it is impossible for his judgment to be entirely uninfluenced by his own methods of thinking. Let the student of Church doctrine be as impartial as he can, it is impossible for him to get rid of his judgment as to the value and meaning of that doctrine. Quite frankly, I am suspicious of a teacher or writer who begins by saying: "I am going to tell you nothing of my own. I am going to tell only what the Bible says, or what the Church says." No man can be so impartial as that. If only in the selection of his texts or of his authorities, the personal point of view will be there, however carefully concealed. It is better not to conceal it at all, but to confess it with frankness and humility. Therefore without apology I make my attempt. If it has any worth it is because

it is my own contribution, however small, to an interpretation of the meaning of the belief in Jesus Christ, as that belief can be expressed in the terms of our own time.

III

The terms of our own time are essentially moral terms. Our problem is the social problem, the ethical problem; the two are the same. How shall society be built on the foundation of righteousness, justice, and love? How shall the individual, every individual, find his own freedom in a right and just relation to his fellows, a relation that shall express and maintain the rights and freedom of all? How shall the State, the Nation, be so constituted as to maintain the rights and duties, political and industrial, of all its members? We are not interested in abstract speculation, or in metaphysics as that term is commonly understood. For the last half century the social problem has been pressing upon us with ever increasing force. And the social problem is the ethical problem, for there is no ethics except in and through society, and there is no true society that is not founded on the right and just relations of its members.

This social interest has been vastly increased by the world war. Society has fallen into chaos, and out of the materials of that chaos a new society must be built. The problem has become a world problem. Righteousness and justice can no longer be preserved simply within the Nation. No Nation can be safe in isolation because no Nation can be in isolation. The problem concerns not only the rights and duties of individuals, but the rights and duties of sovereign States. How can man live in justice and peace with his neighbors? The solution in detail it may not be for us to see. But everywhere men dream dreams and see visions of a Commonwealth of Free States

where justice and righteousness and peace can be maintained, and by which a true unity of the world's life can be brought to realization. The insistent problem for us is the social problem. The terms of our thinking are moral terms.

It is but putting this thought in another form to say that for us the insistent problem is that of democracy. For if democracy means anything more than a mere description of a form of government, it means a society in which each member is in full moral relations with his fellows. There is as yet no perfect democracy; it is a goal to be attained, not a result already accomplished. It is that conception of the State in which each member plays his full part. Thus law is the expression of the whole community, superimposed only in the sense that it is the expression of the rights and duties of every individual. It is that State in which justice is done *to* all because law is the expression *of* all. Democracy is the Free State, free because liberty and law have met together. Every man is an end in himself, just because every man is a means for the realization of that community in which every man finds his freedom. To bring into being that community, both politically and industrially, is the problem of our time, for only in such a community can the moral problem find its solution. Our problem is the moral problem, and the terms of our thinking are moral terms.

Nor can the solution of that problem be found merely within the borders of any individual State. As the moral problem has become for us the world problem, so must its solution be a world solution. Somehow, by some means, there must be established moral relations between States, between Nations. It may be that no final form of that solution is in sight. But the task is clear, unless the world

is to fall again into chaos. If the war has been in any sense whatever a war against war, if any victory whatever against war has been won, there must under some form be established a Community of Free Nations, a Democracy of Sovereign States. There is no perfect democracy within any State, and it is certain that there is hardly an approach to a democracy between States. Such democracy is a goal to be attained, the community of Nations, in which community each Nation shall play its full part and come fully to its own self-realization. The law between Nations must be the expression of the whole community of Nations, superimposed only in the sense that it is the expression of the full rights and duties of each individual sovereign State. There must come that community of States in which justice is secured *to* all because law is the expression *of* all. There must be in some true sense a Democracy of Free States, free because liberty and law have met together. Every Nation must be an end in itself, just because every Nation is a means for the realization of that Community in which every Nation finds its freedom. Only in such a Commonwealth of Free States can justice and righteousness prevail on earth, only thus can the moral problem find solution. And the moral problem, whether within each Nation, expressing the rights and duties of every citizen, or whether between Nations, expressing the rights and duties of every Nation, is the problem of our time. The terms of our thinking are moral terms.

IV

Now, this fact gives us a great advantage when we turn to the thought of the New Testament. Everywhere in the New Testament the ideas are moral ideas, the terms are moral terms. God is a moral Being. His essence is love.

He is the Father whose loving care goes out toward all His children. God is never thought of as a substance, as a *thing,* a dark unknown background of existence.[1] "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."[2] And that light is the light of love. God is always conceived in terms of character. And His character is manifested through Jesus Christ, who came to do His will. Through Christ the character of God becomes the life and law of the children of God. The terms of the New Testament are ethical, social, terms.

Social because ethical. It is sometimes said that the New Testament teaches only an individual and not a social morality. But that assertion overlooks the fact that the heart of all ethics is in the relation of a man to his neighbor. And that is the heart of the social problem. The New Testament always thinks of man's relation to God as expressed in his relation to his neighbor. There is carried out to the fullest extent the teaching of the Hebrew prophets by which the righteous God reveals His will in the righteous and just community of His people. Throughout the prophetic teaching the emphasis is on the righteous character of God. Therein lies the difference between Jehovah, the God of Israel, and the nature gods of the surrounding tribes. And the character of Jehovah determines the character of His people. The righteousness of God is revealed in the upbuilding of the righteous commonwealth of Israel whose law shall reflect the justice and mercy and love of God. And this thought of the character

[1]In Heb. 1:3 the word ὑπόστασις (R. V. substance) is applied to the essence of God, but the background of the thought is entirely personal. In the so-called Second Epistle of Peter, generally recognized as a late writing, there is the phrase "partakers of the divine nature" (φύσις). This phrase suggests Hellenistic thought.

[2]I John 1:5.

of God as determining human life is carried out to the fullest extent in the New Testament. God is love, and, therefore, the service of God is in love of the brethren. The love of God becomes the law of the kingdom of God.

Whether or not the phrase "kingdom of God" is used in the New Testament primarily in an eschatological sense, that is, as a society to be established by a future divine act, it is at any rate true that the laws of that society are moral laws, that they express the right relation of a man to his neighbor, a relation founded upon a common relation to God. It is impossible to emphasize too strongly the New Testament insistence on the right relation of man to man. Our Lord joins together the two great commandments, love to God and love to the neighbor, and in the parable of the Last Judgment there is no other test than "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."[1] St. Paul who finds the source of all righteousness in trust in God, yet finds that righteousness expressed in membership in the body of Christ, the organic society in which every member plays his part for the common good. "He that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law."[2] St. John, the mystic, looking into the very face of God, is by that vision brought into closest relation with the children of God. In the plainest possible words he says, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen."[3] The all-dominating thought of the New Testament is the character of God. The terms are ethical terms. The moral life of God is the foundation of fellowship

[1] Matt. 25:40.
[2] Rom. 13:8.
[3] I John 4:20.

among men. If we are true to the spirit and purpose of the New Testament, we shall find ourselves in closest touch with the problem of our own time, the problem of a new society whose Maker and Builder is God, and whose laws express the right relation of man to man.

This fact should determine for us our approach to the belief in Jesus Christ. If we are to see God in Him, we shall see God's character, God's love, manifest in Him. We may for our purpose safely set aside any metaphysics that for us has lost its insistent meaning, and may still feel that we are in closest accord with the New Testament. To be true at once to the thought of our own time and to the thought of the New Testament will be to understand the Person of Jesus Christ in moral terms.

V

Here I would guard against a misunderstanding. There is a feeling that, if we speak of Christ in moral terms alone, in terms of the supremacy of His character and His complete fulfillment of His task, we are not dealing with the deepest reality of His being. There is a tendency to think that if He is regarded as divine only in character and in will, there is still something left unsaid. Is He not divine in substance as well as in character? Is it sufficient to think of Him in ethical terms? Must we not, in order to do justice to His divinity, to His deity, also think of Him in metaphysical terms?

The answer to that question depends on what is our conception of reality, and on what we mean by metaphysics. Surely, Christian faith sees in Christ the supreme reality of God. But of what does the supreme reality of God consist? St. John says that God is love. And if to us the supreme reality of God lies in His character, His will,

righteousness, love, we may be confident that if we see in Jesus Christ the supreme, the absolute manifestation of God's will and character, God's righteousness and love, then we shall see in Him the most real expression of deity. If love be the essence of God, then in His Son, in whom the divine love is perfectly realized, we have the deepest expression of the divine being.

Do we need a metaphysical Christ? If metaphysics is the search after the nature of reality, and if we seek to find in Christ the reality of God, then in that sense we need a metaphysical interpretation of His Person. But if the supreme reality be moral, if the deepest thing about God is His moral will, His character, His love, then a true metaphysics will itself be moral. And in considering Jesus Christ in moral terms we shall be giving the true metaphysics of His Person.

Now here we strike the difference, of which much more will have to be said later, between, on the one hand, the Biblical thought of God, and, on the other hand, the thought of God which prevailed in the Greco-Roman world, in the terms of which the Christology of the early Church came to its most definite expression. The Bible, Old and New Testament alike, thinks of God as character, as a living and creative will. The Greek conceived of God rather as an abstract substance underlying all reality, a substratum of pure being, free from all the relations of life and accident and change. Thus the Greek metaphysic did not treat character, will, as belonging to supreme reality, but thought of that reality as purely abstract being, substance, devoid of all attributes. The only affirmation that can be made about such a substance is that it *is*.

Now the Christian thought immediately found itself in contact with this Greek or Hellenistic world. Its task

was to conquer that world. Consequently in the first eight centuries, during which the doctrine of the Person of Christ was worked out, that doctrine necessarily was expressed in the terms of Hellenistic thought. God was conceived of as substance, and therefore Christ was declared to be "of one substance with the Father." The statement was inevitable, and was the only possible way in which the Arian separation between God and Christ could be overcome. The *homoousion* rightly expressed the Christian thought in the terms of that age, and, since it is always the task of Christian theology to express truth in the terms of its own time, the Nicene theology was true to that task. It owes its permanent significance to the fact that it expressed and defended the deity of Christ in the only terms in which it could be expressed and defended in that age. That expression was in terms of *substance,* the metaphysics was concerned with the idea of substance. And if we truly appreciate the value of that attempt, we shall be bold to make the attempt that is needed for ourselves. We shall think of Christ in moral terms, and we shall be convinced that, in so doing, we are thinking of Him in terms of the deepest reality. We shall translate the Greek metaphysics of substance into our own metaphysics, a metaphysics that finds the true reality in the moral will, in the manifestation of that personal love which is the deepest thing that we know about God. The metaphysics for our time must be a moral metaphysics.[1]

VI

Our whole discussion of the idea of God and of the

[1] I have treated this subject more fully in *The Hibbert Journal*, Vol. IV, No. 3, "Does Christian Belief Require Metaphysics?" See also H. R. Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 472.

Person of Jesus Christ must, then, be carried on in moral terms. And this fact leads to what I believe to be a supremely important principle for Christian theology. If every truth that we know about God is a moral truth, then that same truth must be applicable to the life of man. For man is made in the image of God, he is the creature and child of God. His moral life is founded on his relation to God, which relation must be the ground and source of his moral relations to his fellows. Hence the principle for which I contend is as follows:—*No doctrine about God can claim to be a Christian doctrine unless it is capable of application to and expression in the life of man.*[1] The moral life of God is to Christian belief the foundation of the moral life of men, the corner stone of the kingdom of God. An abstract philosophy may conceivably hold theories about God which have no bearing on human life. But such theories have no place in a Christian theology which views God as the Creator and source of human life, and which holds man to be made in the image of God, the son of his heavenly Father.

This principle demands further discussion, for it opens up the whole subject of the relation between religion and morality, and especially the Christian relation. It has been maintained that in primitive forms of religion there was no connection between religion and morality. But this view overlooks the fact that morality is the expression of man's social life, and that religion has always been one of the chief factors in determining man's social life. It is a fair thesis that the origin and growth of the family, of a sense of law and obligation, of the elementary State, were closely connected with, if not indeed the direct product of,

[1] See an article by me in *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. II, No. 3, "A Basic Principle for Theology."

religious practices and belief.[1] Nowhere has religion been without effect on the formation of custom, and custom, *mos,* lies close to the heart of the morality to which it has given its name. Probably religion has never been without effect on morality.

Of course that effect has not always been a sound one. So long as God is not regarded as moral, so long the relation to such a being cannot establish a true morality among men. If the god be a mere nature god, whose power is feared and who needs to be propitiated or cajoled into favor, of course there can be little true moral value resulting from dependence on such a deity. Yet even in such religion there is produced a common sense of loyalty to the god of the tribe, a feeling of responsibility for the religious worship which concerns the tribe as a whole. And in such feelings of a common responsibility and of a common loyalty, there are elements of great social value, even though that value is not complete. Take for example the often highly irrational sense of a *taboo,* of something that is forbidden on account of some relation to the deity. Offence against such a taboo is supposed to injure not only the individual but the tribe. Hence the taboo is maintained by custom or law, and there results a sense of obligation and of a common responsibility. And these are elements of moral value. Yet those elements can be fully realized only when the god is regarded as moral, for only such a god can be the basis for a true morality among his

[1]See e. g. the brilliant book of Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City.* Also Otto Pfleiderer, *Philosophy and Development of Religion,* Eng. trans. vol. I, p. 37. "It is an incontestable fact that the primitive morality stands in very close connection with the primitive religion, and indeed that the beginnings of all social customs and legal ordinances are directly derived from religious notions and ceremonial practices."

worshippers. Also when in polytheism the religious dependence is divided among many gods, there will be lacking a sense of common unity. At most such unity will prevail only among those who worship one in particular of the many gods. Worshippers of other gods will be outside the pale.

Even in these imperfect forms religion has had a profound effect in producing laws and customs, in developing a sense of social responsibility, and in uniting in moral groups the worshippers of a common god. But it is only as we get the belief in one God whose nature is moral that we get a real unity for mankind, and a morality that has its source in the moral nature of God.

It is supremely in the religion of Israel that we get the belief in God as moral, and in God who is at the same time the one God to whom Israel owes allegiance. That belief gives the basis for the moral life of the people. The righteous Jehovah demands that He be worshipped in righteousness and truth. As Israel worships a common God, the life of Israel becomes a unity, and as that God is righteous, so must His righteousness be expressed in the laws of the righteous commonwealth which He has established by His covenant. The book of Deuteronomy is a noble example of the belief that the righteous Lawgiver must be worshipped in mercy and in justice among men.

It is of course true that this lofty conception of one God as a moral Being did not in Israel attain full supremacy. The priestly elements of the religion put the ritual law of sacrifices and burnt offerings at least as high as the demand for righteousness of life. Hence the inevitable antagonism between the priest and the prophet. The prophet voices the demand of Israel's God that He be worshipped not in ritual but in righteousness. "Wherewith shall I come be-

fore the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"[1] The same prophetic voice speaks through the Psalmist:

"For thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it:
Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering."

And yet in the same psalm some later scribe, looking forward to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, utters the persistent demand of the ritualist:

"Then shalt thou delight in the sacrifices of righteousness, in burnt offering and whole burnt offering:
Then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar."[2]

It is the ever recurring contest between the formalist, and the prophet of the righteous God.

It is also evident that Israel did not rise to the full height of its belief in one God. Jehovah was primarily the God of Israel, rather than the God of the world. The moral duty of the Israelite was largely limited to those who were members of the community of Israel. The word "neighbor" meant preëminently a fellow Israelite. The gentile stood without the pale. And yet there were many gleams of a larger vision. As Jehovah became not only the God of the Hebrews but the only God, as other deities became "no gods," there came to the prophet's soul the

[1] Micah 6:6-8.
[2] Psa. 51:16-19.

vision of a world unity, and a belief that Israel's mission was to bless all nations. But the vision was clouded. Israel did not rise to the full height of its own belief in one God, the moral ruler of mankind.

It is in our Lord that the vision reaches its fulfillment. Jesus fulfils what is highest in Israel's prophets, when to the question, What is the great commandment of the law? He answers: "The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Therein He brings together the two supreme teachings of the prophets, that God is One, and that He can be worshipped only by showing forth in life that which belongs to the very character of God Himself. One of His listeners deeply understood His meaning and caught sight of that which His meaning implied. "The scribe said unto him, Of a truth, Teacher, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." It is no wonder that the Master said to him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."[1] For the scribe has grasped the radicalism of the Master's teaching. God is love, and the only service that can be rendered to Him is the service of love. The axe is laid at the root of the tree of all merely ritual worship. "There is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man. . . . This he said, mak-

[1]Mark 12:28-34, Matt. 22:36-40.

ing all meats clean."[1] All distinctions of clean and unclean fall away. All mere ritual must yield to the worship that is in spirit and in truth. The first and great commandment of the law attains its rightful place. God can be served only by the manifestation of that love which belongs to the very nature and being of God Himself.

This belief in the oneness of God reaches its full result in the second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The one God is the God of all men. To the question, "Who is my neighbour?" the Lord replies by the parable of the Jew and the Samaritan.[2] Henceforth the *neighbor* means not only a fellow Israelite, but a fellow child of God. The Apostle Paul fully expresses the meaning of the parable, when he writes: "There is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him."[3]

We must later look more fully into the meaning of our Lord's teaching concerning the Fatherhood of God. At present it will suffice to emphasize only these two elements, that God is absolutely One, and that He is absolutely a moral Being. He is the one God whose nature is Love, and therefore the whole duty of man is summed up in love, love to God and love to our neighbor. Man is the child of God, the son of God, and therefore all that is true of the life of God can and should be realized in the life of man. "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."[4] The perfection of our Father in heaven is the birthright of the children of God.

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[1]Mark 7:15-19, R. V. The Authorized Version rests on a different text, καθαρίζον instead of καθαρίζων.
[2]Luke 10:25-37.
[3]Rom. 10:12.
[4]Matt. 5:48.

If one were forced to attempt an abstract definition of the Christian faith in its difference from other religions, it would not be going far afield to say that Christianity is the absolute union of religion and morality. It is not indeed their identity. Religion expresses the relation of God to man, and there is always in the life of God that which is vastly greater than at any given period is expressed in the relation between man and man. The religious content is never exhausted in any special form of moral realization. It has always *something more.* It forms the permanent basis for the ever expanding moral life of man. It opens up the inexhaustible sources of the life of God. Yet that life of God is never separated from the life of man. God, the Christian God, cannot be found in solitude. For God is the source of human life, the foundation of human fellowship, and He can be found only in and through the human fellowship which comes from Him. It is told of a certain astronomer that he said, "I have swept the heavens with my telescope, and I have not found God." He was not looking in the right place. God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ cannot be found in the stars. He cannot be found in the desert, or in the cave of the solitary life. He can be found only in and through the human life which comes from Him. The union with God can be realized only in that human fellowship which has its source and foundation in the divine life. The Fatherhood of God is the constant source of our ever deeper and more perfect realization of human brotherhood. The essence of the Christian relation with God is summed up in the words, already partially quoted, of St. John: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this com-

mandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also."[1] Christianity is the absolute union of religion and morality.

And this brings us again to the principle which I have emphasized for Christian theology:—No doctrine about God can claim to be a Christian doctrine unless it is capable of application to and expression in the life of man. Every truth about God is an ethical truth, a social truth. As we know God, we know men, who are made in the image of God.

What is the meaning of the familiar phrase of St. Paul, "the communion (or the fellowship) of the Holy Ghost?"[2] Does it mean a fellowship with the Spirit of God, or does it mean a fellowship among men produced by the Spirit of God? And the only possible answer, if we are true to the thought of St. Paul as well as to the thought of the whole New Testament, is that it means both, that it means one because it means the other. There is no fellowship with the Holy Spirit of God except as that fellowship is realized in the life of the children of God. And there is no final basis for a fellowship among men except the basis of a common fellowship with the Spirit of God. If a man truly seek God he must find his fellows, and if he would truly find his fellows he must find God. I repeat, therefore, that every Christian doctrine about God must have its direct bearing on and application to the moral, the social, life of man.

VII

Rigid insistence on this principle will prevent our theology from becoming academic or unreal. It is sometimes said that to-day men want not theology but ethics. The

[1] I John 4:20-21.
[2] II Cor. 13; 14.

distinction is a false one, provided Christian theology is true to its high calling. What the saying really means is that men are not interested in merely abstract or theoretical doctrines. And there is no reason why they should be. But also such doctrines have no place in a true Christian theology. God, the Christian God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the source of all that is true and good in the life of man. And therefore every truth about God must be rich with human values. If a supposed truth about God has no meaning for man, it is, by that very fact, not a Christian truth, it is not true for God as we know Him in Jesus Christ.

It is largely the purpose of these lectures to apply this principle to the belief in the Incarnation, to indicate that through the incarnate Son of God the incarnate life becomes true for men, that through Christ men are truly the sons of God, and can through Him attain to the full realization of that sonship, even to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. But the same principle applies to every Christian doctrine, and I would here suggest briefly a few of such applications.

Every Christian doctrine should be looked at under two aspects, *sub specie aeternitatis* and *sub specie temporis*. Under the aspect of eternity, each doctrine should be seen to be a truth about God; under the aspect of time, each doctrine should have its application to the life of man. Take, for example, the doctrine of the Atonement. It is certainly not a Christian doctrine if it supposes that some transaction takes place in the divine life which is not in accordance with the ethical principles of the kingdom of God. Such theories have been set forth. God's righteous law has been represented as satisfied by the punishment of the innocent, a transaction utterly out of accord with any

morality that can stand the Christian ethical test. And such a transaction has been defended as a "mystery," as though any mystery could exist in God which contradicts the moral principles of God's kingdom. The doctrine of the Atonement becomes a Christian doctrine only when it expresses the supreme law of all fellowship, the fellowship with God and the fellowship that comes from God. The divine love suffers with sin as all love must suffer with the sin of the beloved; the divine love bears the burden of sin as all love must bear the burden of sin. The law of vicarious suffering is the law of God, and therefore it is the law of human fellowship. The law of sacrifice is the law of all love, divine or human, and the sacrifice of the cross reveals the true law of human life. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."[1] Unless the doctrine of the Atonement can meet that test, it is not a Christian doctrine.

The doctrine of the Church must see the Church as a divine creation, humanity re-created in Christ, to show forth on earth the life of God. But for that very reason the Church must be the highest expression, the sign and symbol and sacrament, of human fellowship. It must be vitally concerned with bringing to pass that fellowship on earth. If the Church becomes a mere refuge from the world, an ark in which the individual soul may seek safety while others perish, it is not the Church of Jesus Christ. The Church is not true to its note of catholicity unless it is trying to make the principles of the kingdom of God universal among men. *Humani nil a me alienum puto.* There is no human interest with which the Church is not concerned. It must be aggressive against all evil, with the

[1]Gal. 6:2.

aggressiveness of God. It is the sacrament, the outward and visible sign, of the justice and righteousness and love of God. It is the work of the Church that that which is true of the life of God should also be made true for the life of men.

The same principle holds of the doctrine of the Sacraments. The sacraments express, first, the actual contact with the life of God, the regenerating and sanctifying power of the divine Spirit. But they also express the fellowship of human life, the fellowship found in and created by the Spirit of God. The sacrament of regeneration is also the sacrament of admission into the fellowship of Christ's Church. The sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ is also the sacrament of membership in His Body which is the Church. It is the common meal of those who as joined to Christ are united with each other in the bonds of Christian fellowship. At the Lord's Table all distinctions of rank or money or influence are set aside. All are citizens of the kingdom of God, all are priests in their common relation to the High Priest of humanity. It is the divine protest against all false divisions of society. It is the sacrament of the supreme Democracy of the kingdom of God.

The belief in the Holy Trinity is not a Christian belief unless it finds in the fellowship of the divine Love the eternal source of fellowship among men, unless the Trinitarian life of God is regarded as the fountain and source of all the sacred relationships of human life. The doctrine of the Trinity is not a separate doctrine. It is the great summation of Christian belief, finding in God the eternal foundations of the true society which through God's creative love is to be builded among men.

In every Christian doctrine about God there is to be

found in God that which can and should also become true for the life of man. We are here concerned with the special application of this principle to the doctrine of the Incarnation, the belief in the divine humanity of Jesus Christ. It is in Jesus that the life of God comes into full contact with humanity. In Him the life of God becomes the life of man. In Him the kingdom of God finds its realization, the incarnate life of Christ becomes the principle of the true life of His brethren. If in any Christian sense we are to find God in Christ, we are to find in His character the ethical principles of all human life, the basis of genuine human fellowship, the foundation of that kingdom of God in which righteousness and justice and truth and love become the law of life. And if Democracy expresses the ideal of every man's true relation to his neighbor, we are to find the eternal principles of a true democracy in the Christ who is the Son of God and the Brother of all men. So to know the mind of Christ will be to understand Him in moral terms, to understand Him in those terms which are demanded by the thoughts and problems of our own time.

VIII

Let us now briefly review the course of our thought, and thus indicate more clearly the task which is before us. We considered, first, that the problem of making Christ real for ourselves is the problem of understanding Him in the terms of our own thinking, in accordance with the ideals of our own time. Such has always been the task of a true Christian theology. To appreciate fully the theology of the past is to follow its methods rather than to abide by its results. Only by making theology contemporaneous do

we appreciate the value of the historic faith and its lesson for ourselves. Our task is to make the Christ of the past real for our own thought.

Secondly, in order to accomplish that task we must seek sympathetically to understand the Christian belief from inside, rather than to approach it by arguments from outside. The best apologetic for belief in Christ will be our understanding of what that belief means for us. The strongest proof for the belief will come from our ability to express that belief in terms of our own thought.

Thirdly, it is clear that those terms are moral terms. The problem for us to-day is the moral problem, the social problem. And that is the problem of democracy. For the task of democracy is to secure a society in which every member plays his full part, and in which, therefore, the law of the society is the true freedom of every individual member. The problem for our times, both within the individual Nation and between the Nations, is the problem of democracy, which is the moral problem. The terms of our thinking are moral terms.

Fourthly, these are essentially the terms of the Bible, especially of the New Testament. God is conceived of as a moral Being, not as a metaphysical substance. Jesus teaches that God is Father, that His essence is love. And if we are to understand Jesus and the way in which He reveals God, we shall understand and interpret Him in moral terms.

Fifthly, it is not to be supposed that a purely moral treatment of the Person of Christ deals less deeply with His essential being, or does less justice to His deity, than a so-called metaphysical treatment. Certainly if we are to see Christ as truly divine, we must find in Him the essential being of God. But if that being is itself moral, then,

in interpreting Christ in moral terms, we are interpreting Him in terms that belong to the very essence of God, we are doing full justice to His divine nature. If we mean by metaphysics the search after the nature of reality, then in that sense we do indeed need a metaphysics of the Person of Christ. But if we believe that the deepest reality is moral, then the distinction between an ethical and a metaphysical theory about Christ will disappear. Our most true metaphysics will be a moral metaphysics. We shall understand Christ as we understand God, in moral terms.

Sixthly, we are, in fidelity to the moral point of view, brought to a vital principle for Christian theology. If God be moral and if men are the sons of God, then every truth about God must be capable of application to and expression in the life of man. No Christian belief can be of merely academic or abstract meaning. If it is really Christian it must be of value for life. The Christian faith brings about a complete unity between religion and morality. God is the source of human fellowship. And, therefore, every truth about God must also be true for the kingdom of God on earth. Every Christian doctrine must meet that moral test. Otherwise it is not a Christian doctrine, it has no place in a Christian theology. In learning to know God we must at the same time learn to know the laws of the society of His children, the laws of that City which cometh down out of heaven, and whose Maker and Builder is God.

We shall try to apply these principles to the Christian doctrine of the Person of Christ. Our next task will be to discuss what is meant by the divine humanity of Jesus.

CHAPTER II

DIVINE AND HUMAN

I

The doctrine of the Christian faith with which we are concerned is commonly spoken of as that of the Divinity or Deity of Christ. More accurately expressed it is the doctrine of His Divine-Humanity. However unfair from time to time Christian theology may have been to the belief in the humanity of Jesus, it has at any rate explicitly asserted it as an essential part of the orthodox Christian faith. It has held that Jesus was both divine and human. It has maintained belief in Him as the God-Man.

Now it is evident that we can attach no meaning to the phrase "divine-humanity" or to the phrase "God-Man" except as we attach a meaning to the terms involved. To understand what we mean by divine-humanity demands an understanding of what we mean by "divine" and by "human." The phrase God-Man requires that we ask what we mean by "God" and by "man." That then must be our first task. What do we mean by "divine" and by "human," and by the relation between them? What do we mean by "God" and by "man?"

It also ought to be self evident that, as we are examining a Christian doctrine, we should give to the terms involved the Christian meaning. What is the Christian belief about God and about man? Only thus can we shape a Christian doctrine of the God-Man.

I say that this ought to be self evident, so much so that it seems hardly worth while to state it. And yet as a fact the caution is necessary and indeed needs to be strongly emphasized. It has too often happened that a supposedly Christian doctrine of the God-Man has been based on concepts of God and of man which were not themselves the Christian concepts. That was indeed the great difficulty when Christian theology came into contact with the Greco-Roman world. It tried to express the Christian belief in terms of an idea of God and of man which were not themselves Christian, and which gave no place for a complete union of divine and human. Thus, in spite of energetic protests, the concept of the divinity of Christ tended to crowd out His humanity. Mediaeval Christian thought inherited the difficulty, and it has been far from out-grown by modern theology.[1] To overcome the difficulty we must hold ourselves strictly to the Christian thought of God and of man. Only thus can we properly state the Christian doctrine of the God-Man.

Now the Christian thought about God and about man is fundamentally the thought of Christ Himself. It is undoubtedly true that theology has too often departed from the mind of Christ, and has constructed dogmas about Him that were not in accordance with His own thought. It has constructed a theoretical relation between God and man, instead of understanding and appreciating the relation actually accomplished in Jesus Christ. Too often dogmatic theories have prevented a right understanding of the

[1]The same criticism may be made of types of modern theology of the "speculative" school. The attempt to form a Christology on the basis of the Hegelian concept of the Absolute and of the realization of the identity of God and man in the Incarnation, has failed to express the Christian thought.

New Testament, theories about the Person of Christ, theories as to the infallible inspiration of Scripture. Such dogmas have often stood in the way of Christ Himself. Nevertheless the purpose, however inadequately carried out, has always been to interpret Christ, and the picture of Jesus in the New Testament has been a steady corrective to theories that might otherwise have gone much farther astray. We to-day, with the results at hand of the historical criticism of the Bible, ought to be better able to see Jesus Christ as He actually was, and better able to understand His teaching. If in any true way we are to see Him as divine and human, we must ask what He meant by divine and by human and by the relation between them. A Christian doctrine of the God-Man must be based on our Lord's own teaching about God and about man. We must understand Jesus by the teaching of Jesus.

II

For that teaching we must first of all look back to the Old Testament. For Jesus brought forth out of His treasure things new and old. The Hebrew prophetic concept of God was His by inheritance and training. He came not to destroy but to fulfil. Much that He held was common to Him and to His hearers. To understand Him as He meant to be understood by those to whom He spoke, we must understand the Hebrew background of His teaching.

Two elements of Hebrew thought are of especial importance in this connection. The first is the belief in God as the Creator, as the source and origin of the ordered universe and of the life of man. This belief is one of the highest expressions of Hebrew prophecy. It is, of course, the

result of a long development of thought. At first Jehovah was simply the God of Israel. There were other gods, but He was the God to whom Israel owed allegiance, the only God for Israel. He was guiding Israel to its destiny, He was the creator and source of all that was true and right in Israel's life. Gradually the belief developed, and Jehovah became the only God. Other nations became subject to His will, their gods were "no gods." He is the Lord of all. And in the first chapter of Genesis He is regarded as the Creator of the whole universe even to its farthest bounds. He is the Lord not only of earth but of the host of heaven. The sun and moon are His creation. He made the stars also. It is to be sure not clear that the writer means that God was the Creator of matter, or whether He made the world out of a preëxisting material. The Hebrews were not metaphysicians and had little interest in speculative problems. Their interest was religious and moral. But it is certainly clear that this narrative regards God as the sole author and source of the universe as we know it.[1]

It is hardly necessary to say that a high estimate of the religious nature of this Hebrew account of creation does not imply agreement with its details. We know that creation did not take place in any six days, but that it was a

[1] "The central doctrine is that the world is *created*,—that it originates in the will of God, a personal Being transcending the universe and existing independently of it. The pagan notion of a Theogony—a generation of the gods from the elementary world-matter—is entirely banished. It is, indeed, doubtful if the representation goes so far as a *creatio ex nihilo*, or whether a preëxistent chaotic material is postulated. . . . it is certain at least that the *Kosmos*, the ordered world with which alone man has to do, is wholly the product of divine intelligence and volition." John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, p. 7.

process of evolution occupying millions of years. The Hebrew science is not ours. But evolution does not destroy belief in creation. The belief in creation with which we are here concerned is a religious belief, and we leave to science the account of the way in which it took place. In the Genesis account of creation we are concerned with the religious background. And that religious background is belief in God from whom comes the world of nature and of man. Man is the creature of God and is dependent on his Creator. That fundamental difference between God and man is one essential element of Hebrew thought.

The other element with which we are here concerned is the nearness of God to the world and to man. The difference between Creator and creature does not mean that God stands apart from the world which He has made. Quite the contrary. The Old Testament has a profound sense of the nearness of God. He is close to human life, He is the guiding force of Israel's history. The prophet sees in Israel's successes the immediate presence and favor of God, in her failures He sees God's chastisement for her sins. God stands in closest relation to His chosen people, guiding and guarding, loving and correcting them. He is Israel's husband, drawing her by His love. The Psalms are a constant witness to the nearness of God.

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."
"The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer."
"If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me."[1]

[1]Psa. 23:1; 18:2; 139:9-10.

In the crises of our lives we still go to these Hebrew psalms and find in them the deepest expression of our need for God and of our confidence in His protecting care.

Now these two elements of Hebrew thought, the difference between God and man as Creator and creature, and the nearness of God to man, are not opposed. Rather they are closely connected. From this one difference result the deepest intimacy and the closest union. Wherever in religious thought this fundamental difference is lacking, it is easy to see that God and man are not thought of as really coming together.

III

Perhaps the simplest example of this is to be found in the difference between Hebrew and Greek thought. The Greek knew no absolute distinction between God and the world, between God and man. He had no real doctrine of creation, that is, he did not start with belief in the living personal God, from whose intelligence and will came the universe. Greek thought was both pantheistic and polytheistic, the two are indeed but different sides of the same thing. It has been well said that polytheism is the "small change" of pantheism. Pantheism makes no radical distinction between God and the world. God is the All, absolute Being, the essence of all reality. Polytheism makes no radical distinction between the gods and men. The gods are magnified men. And from the lack of any clear distinction between divine and human, it resulted that divine and human could never be perfectly united. If they were to come together, one of them must be sacrificed.

In the popular polytheism of Greece, this result can be clearly seen in the belief in the jealousy or envy of the gods. The gods were greater than men, more powerful,

more blessed. But there was no real difference, and hence if men became more than so great or powerful or prosperous or blessed, they were liable to become gods. Thus the envy of the gods was aroused, and they became jealous. The gods were not sure of their position, they were *parvenus, nouveaux riches.* They must needs be jealous of their prerogatives. Once in a while some especially successful mortal, like Hercules, might force his way into heaven, and win recognition as a god. But far more often such great success is regarded as pride, insolence, and Zeus gets out his thunderbolts and drives the presumptuous wight back where he belongs. Prometheus steals the divine fire, and Zeus binds him to the rock in torture. The lack of any real distinction between gods and men heaps up artificial distinctions. The jealousy of the gods keeps men in their proper, subordinate, place.

Now such a conception of divine jealousy is practically lacking in the Old Testament. There are traces of it here and there, as in the story of the garden of Eden, where the serpent tempts Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, [or as gods] knowing good and evil."[1] Also in the story of the tower of Babel whose top should reach up to heaven.[2] Such traces are not surprising, as the Hebrew religion grew up out of the surrounding nature religions, retaining remnants of its growth. But the jealousy of God as found in the Hebrew prophets is not lest men should aspire too high. It is jealousy lest anything should come between men and God, lest men should stray

[1]Gen. 3:5. R. V. See margin.

[2]Gen. 11:4-6.

after false gods, lest they should fail of their high destiny. Such jealousy does not keep men from God, it draws them to Him. It is a consuming fire toward all that comes between God and man. The Hebrew God is not afraid as to His own standing. The Creator is not afraid of His own creatures. He has made men in His image, after His likeness. He draws near to men that they may draw near to Him.

In the deeper pantheistic thought of Greece we find the same inability of God and man to meet together. God is pure Being, unmoved substance, the essence of all reality. The world as we see it is in movement, change, growth, variety. But if God is really the All, if He alone is true reality, then what shall we think of movement, change, variety, life? Must they not be unreal, must they not be mere appearance? One of the chief problems of Greek philosophy was, abstractly expressed, the relation between "being" and "becoming," between the unmoved, unrelated essence of reality, and the world of movement and change. The most logical solution, and the one to which Greek thought tended constantly to recur, was that all this change and movement are unreal. This was the answer of the Eleatic School. And this answer was supported by the fact that, as soon as we begin to examine the idea of movement, we find it full of contradictions. The well known paradoxes of Zeno were to prove that change, movement, is unreal, is a delusion. Swift footed Achilles cannot catch the tortoise, for when Achilles gets to the place where the tortoise was, it has already gone ahead; when he gets again to the place where it was, it has gone ahead again, although ever so short a distance. It is logically impossible that he should ever overtake it. The flying arrow rests. Presumably the thought was something like this. If the flying

arrow does not rest, then it moves. But where does it move? It must move either in the place where it is, or in the place where it is not. It surely cannot move in the place where it is, for there is there no room for it to move in. But equally surely it cannot move in the place where it is not, for it is not there to move. It does not move at all, it rests. Motion is a delusion; change, life, variety are unreal. The only reality is the One, the unrelated substance, pure Being.

This same thought deeply affected the religious ideal of Greece. If God is the One and the All, if He is pure Being, if He alone is true reality, and the world of movement is unreal, then man in order to know God must leave the world of time and change. He must cease to be an individual, he must lose himself, must sink into ecstatic swoon, in order to realize his identity with God. He can know God only by ceasing to be himself. He must give up all that belongs to his separate, individual life. God and man cannot come together unless man ceases to be man and becomes identical with God.

Pantheism is often supposed to offer a religious basis for true union with God. What can be simpler than to say that God is all, that all is God, and that therefore man can always find his true self in the divine? What deeper unity can be found than identity? But the offer of unity is a false one. Wherever pantheism is at the heart of religion there man's individual, personal life fails to be maintained as soon as he seeks God. Whether in Greece or in India the individual in finding God loses himself. "The dewdrop slips into the shining sea,"[1] and there loses itself in the vague ocean of existence.

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[1]Edwin Arnold, *The Light of Asia*, closing line.

The late Henry S. Nash well compared the pantheistic concept of union with God to the fable of the sick lion and the fox.[1] The lion, being sick, invited all the animals to his den for a feast. When the fox approached the den, he saw in the sand the footprints of many animals who had accepted the invitation. But on considering them closely he noticed that all the tracks went into the cave and none came out again. And the wily fox decided to stay outside. Pantheism takes man into God, but it is at the expense of man's own life.

Now the Hebrew concept of union with God totally lacks this pantheistic basis. God is the Creator and man is the creature. There is one fundamental difference between God and man, which can never be set aside or overcome. Hence man cannot *be* God, but he can, without losing himself, come into close, living relation with God. The belief in the divine creatorship offers a unity with God such as pantheism can never give.

Hence these two elements of the Old Testament belief, that God is the Creator and that God enters into the closest relations with men, are fundamentally connected. We shall see shortly the importance of these two elements in regard to the Christian belief in God.

IV

With this glance at the Old Testament background we turn to the teaching of our Lord. What did Jesus hold and teach as to the idea of God and of man and of the relation between them?

In answering this question we must keep clear in mind the background which we have been considering. Jesus

[1] H. S. Nash, *The Atoning Life*, p. 5.

did not lay down a system of theology. He was a preacher, a prophet. And, like every preacher who conveys his message to his hearers, He spoke the language common to Himself and to those to whom He spoke. We cannot understand Him unless we understand the meaning of His terms.

Our Lord taught that God is our Father. The all ruling idea of His thought of God's relation to men is that of the divine Fatherhood. But we shall fail to understand Him if we take for granted that the word Father meant to Him exactly what it is apt to mean to us. It too easily suggests to us a soft, indulgent attitude, a sort of general good-nature. The word "paternalism" has become a weak word. It carries the idea of a mild benevolence, with little regard for men's duties and men's rights, little emphasis on the more rigid elements of law and obligation which go to make up a strong and worthy character. If our Father in heaven means to us no more than paternalism in government on earth, then God will be to us merely an indulgent parent. The divine Fatherhood will run the risk of becoming what has been called a divine "papahood." We shall have strayed far from our Lord's thought.

It is in place to point out that this same weakness too often creeps into our use of the other great word which our Lord linked with Fatherhood, that is, the word Love. Love too often means for us mere good-natured indulgence, without due regard to the highest interests of the beloved. A mother with a spoiled child may try to excuse herself by saying that she loved her child too much. It is a hideous thing to say. She has spoiled him by loving him too little. She has loved herself too much, or rather she has too much loved her own ease, her own comfort, she has been unwilling to pay the price of love. For true love demands sacrifice, sternness towards sin, rigid insistence on duty, a high

demand on moral character. Only thus can it do justice to the loved one. Love that is mere indulgence is not true love at all. It has omitted the weightier matters of the law.

If in any such way we interpret our Lord's teaching of the heavenly Father, or of the love of God, we fail utterly to understand His thought. We err by reason of our contemporaneity, that is, we carry our contemporaneous ideas into the terms, instead of asking what the terms meant to our Lord Himself. To answer that question we must turn to the background of His thought. To the ancient world, the word father suggested authority and power. We need not here discuss the disputed question as to whether the patriarchate, the rule of the father, was the earliest form of the family, and the earliest form of primitive society. At any rate, in the time with which we deal, the father stood for authority and power. Law and order centered around the father's rule. In the Old Testament the whole growth of Israel as a nation was the growth out of a family. It was represented as beginning with the covenant with Abraham and with his seed. The family was the foundation of the nation, and the strength of the family was the strength of the nation. "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." In this "first commandment with promise,"[1] the promise of long life was not to individuals but to a nation. That nation shall be strong to live whose foundations are laid deep in reverence and honor for the life of the family. And the father as the source and head of the family stands for the embodiment of authority and power. The same concept prevailed also in the Greek

[1] Eph. 6:2.

and Roman world. The *patria potestas* stood close to the foundation of the Roman State. So has China preserved until the present day this ancient reverence for parents as the first expression of social law.

Now in Jesus' teaching that God is our Father, all these elements of law and authority are retained. And herein we have the connection with the Hebrew belief in God as Creator. God is the Creator and source of human life. His righteous will is the foundation of human society, the basis of man's righteous relation to his neighbor. Man is dependent on God, and is to see in God the source of his own moral life. God is Creator, and man is His creature.

This conception of God as Creator, Jesus accepts with all its implications. But He not only accepts it, He transforms and ennobles it by His teaching that God is Father. His creatorship is that of love, that of a Father, who creates His children in His own image. Not, of course, that the idea of God as a loving Father was altogether new. The Old Testament had known God as the Father of His people, had known much of the divine love. But to Jesus the belief in the divine, loving, creative Fatherhood is the very heart of His belief in God. God is Creator, but the heart of creatorship is Love. The highest creatorship is the moral and spiritual creatorship of Love. God as Creator is not content with the creation of *things*. He is content only when His Love can bring forth His own children and can give to them the fullness of the divine life. The essence of the divine Fatherhood is creative Love.

I do not know how better to express our Lord's thought of God than by the somewhat awkward phrase that it is the belief in creatorship completely *moralized*. Creatorship is carried over into the moral and spiritual sphere. God as

Father is the Creator of man's moral and spiritual life. God as Creator is the source of all authority and power. But that creative source is Love.

Herein Jesus fulfils the Old Testament belief in God as Creator. For it has been well said that to fulfil means to "fill full."[1] It is thus that Jesus fulfils the message of the prophets of Israel. It is not that they predicted definite acts which He would do. It is that they grasped something of the truth of God, and that Jesus filled that truth full with the contents of His own knowledge of God, with His own consciousness of God as His Father. Indeed may we not say that He thus fulfils not only the prophets of Israel but the prophets of the world? Wherever men have known something of the truth of God, wherever there have been genuine longings and aspirations for God, Jesus has carried out that truth in all its fullness. He has satisfied those longings and aspirations. Out of the depths of His own experience of His Father, He has filled full all of man's knowledge and need of God. The prophets of Israel had known God as the Creator. Jesus knows God as His Father, who creates out of the fullness of His love. The Old Testament knew that God created man in His image, after His likeness; Jesus knows that that image and likeness are realized in men who are the sons of God, who receive the fullness of their Father's love.

What is the source of that knowledge which was His? There we can only stand in awe and wonder before the supreme mystery of the world's religious life. He needed not to be taught of men. "He taught them as one having

[1] πληρόω.

authority, and not as their scribes."[1] It was the work of the scribes to carry on unchanged that which they had received. But He said, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, . . . but I say unto you."[2] And again: "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[3] He knows God as His Father, He knows Himself as God's Son. Through His own inner experience He knows God, and out of that experience He reveals God as His Father. Therein the belief in God as Creator is transformed, completely moralized. God as the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ is God revealed as creative Love.

V

This brings us to His thought of the relation between God and men. Out of the uniqueness of His own experience comes the content of the gospel which He is to preach to others. The God whom He knows as His Father it is His mission to reveal as the Father of men. The Sonship which is His, he proclaims as the inheritance of the children of God. The relation between the divine Sonship which was His and the divine sonship which He

[1]Mark 1:22; Matt. 7:29; Luke 4:32.

[2]Matt. 5:21-22.

[3]Matt. 11:27-28; Luke 10:22. It is questioned whether these words are an authentic saying of Jesus. They need not be pressed. His consciousness of an immediate relation to His Father is sufficiently witnessed to in the Gospels, apart from this text.

reveals for others, forms for us the center of the problem of the uniqueness of Christ; to that problem we must later give special consideration. Here I simply emphasize the fact that out of the uniqueness of His own experience comes the universality of His gospel. The God whom He knows as His Father is revealed as the Father of men. That is the contents of the gospel of the kingdom of God.

It has, indeed, been contended that our Lord did not preach a gospel that was universal, but only a gospel for those who were included in the covenant with Israel, that God is revealed by Him not as the Father of all men, but only as the Father of those who were sons of Abraham. It has been maintained that the Apostle Paul first gave the gospel a universal reference beyond the commonwealth of Israel. In support of this contention such sayings are quoted as, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and: "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. . . . Verily, I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."[1]

It would be fairly easy to answer this contention by quoting other sayings of our Lord, which plainly have a universal reference. Such, for example, are His words, "And the gospel must first be preached unto all the nations."[2] Again He is reported to have said concerning a Roman centurion: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abra-

[1]Matt. 15:24; 10:5-6, 23. It is to be noted that these sayings are given only in Matthew.

[2]Mark 13:10; Matt. 24:14.

ham and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."[1] But instead of balancing texts against texts it is of more importance to emphasize the absolutely universal elements which belong to the *contents* of our Lord's teachings. In putting the two great commandments in their rightful place, in making the essence of God to be love, and man's service to God to consist in love, He wiped away all artificial distinctions that divide man from man. When asked who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, He took a little child, and set him in the midst of them.[2] There are no artificial requirements for the kingdom of God. The condition of entrance is the humility of the little child, the condition of membership is the life of love. When He said that nothing from without the man that goeth into him, can defile him, He made all meats clean.[3] He did away with all distinctions of clean and unclean, all requirements of mere ritual, all the things that divide the Jew from the Gentile. In teaching that God is love, and that God can be served only in love, He opened up the life of God to all men. His gospel is universal in its essence.

It may conceivably be true that the special mission of Jesus was to preach to His own people this gospel of the divine love. It may conceivably be true that it was the special mission of St. Paul to carry out to their full extent the universal elements which were already contained in the contents of the Master's message. A universal truth is best realized when it is first grasped in its definite, concrete application. If a religion embraces in its contents that

[1]Matt. 8:10-11. Cf. Luke 7:9; 13:28-29. I forbear to quote Matt. 28:19, on account of the critical difficulties attending this passage.

[2]Mark 9:34-36; Matt. 18:1-4; Luke 9:46-48.

[3]Mark 7:15-23, R. V. See chapter I, pp. 29-30. Matt 15:11-20.

which is true for man in his essential relation with God, then that religion is a missionary religion. It cannot abide content until it makes known *to* all men the message that is true *for* all men. And such was the gospel which Jesus preached. Whether He Himself meant to preach it for all men, or whether He left that task to be carried out by His followers, at any rate He preached a gospel which is true for all humanity. In knowing God as His Father, He revealed Him as the Father of all men. In knowing Himself as the Son of God, He opened divine sonship to all the children of God.

What then did Jesus mean by this divine sonship which belongs to all men? What was His thought of the relation of God to men and of men to God? We shall find the answer implied in the belief that God is Father, that He is creative Love. God is the Giver. As He clothes the grass of the field, much more will He clothe His children. They are not to be anxious about food and raiment, "for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." "Ask, and it shall be given you; . . . Or what man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"[1] God as the Father gives of His fullness to His children. "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine."[2]

And man is the child, the son, of God. God is his Creator and his Father. God's creatorship is love. And

[1]Matt. 6:28-34; 7:7-11. Cf. Luke 11:9-13; 12:26-31.
[2]Luke 15:31.

out of that creating love God gives men all that He has and all that He is. Man is God's son, God's child, and can receive all that the creating love of God would give. St. Paul deeply interprets the mind of Christ: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."[1] And St. John sees that as children of God we are to receive the fullness that comes to us through Christ Himself: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. . . . Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is."[2] God, the heavenly Father, gives all to His children. Men, the children of God, receive all that God's creative love can give.

Hence in our Lord's teaching, God and men meet together in the deepest unity. That unity, foreshadowed in the Hebrew belief in God as Creator, is realized in its fullness through the belief in God as Father. As a father begets sons who are to be his heirs, so God creates His children, who as children are to receive the fullness of the divine life.

VI

If this account of our Lord's teaching be true, we are now prepared to ask the question, What, in accordance with

[1] Rom. 8:14-17.
[2] I John 3:1-2.

the Christian belief in God, is the difference between God and man? Of course we do not find that question directly asked or answered in our Lord's own words. Yet the question is for us of fundamental importance. We are dealing with the belief that the union of God and man is accomplished in Jesus Christ. And we have emphasized the thought that that union can have for us its Christian meaning only if it conceives God and man in truly Christian terms. Thus we have been trying to understand the mind of Christ, and to ask what was His thought of God and of man? We have seen that He thought of God in purely moral terms, that He conceived of Him as the Father, whose essence is creative love, and who creates men as His children, after His own likeness. It is the will of our heavenly Father that His children should come into closest union with Himself, that His character should be expressed in their lives, that they should be perfect even as their heavenly Father is perfect. It is the task of a Christian theology to hold true to this thought of God, and at the same time to apply that thought to our own problems. And, as our special problem is that of the union of God and man accomplished in Christ Jesus, it becomes of fundamental importance for us to ask this question, What, in accordance with the Christian belief in God, is the difference between God and man?

It seems clear that that difference cannot be found in what are called the "attributes" of God, or is to be found in them only in degree. God is creative love, His purpose is to create His children after His likeness. There is nothing in the divine attributes, the divine qualities, which it is not God's purpose to impart to men. The difference then cannot be found in these attributes, and, if we think of them a moment in detail, we can easily see that this is the case.

The supreme attribute of God is love. But it is not love that makes the difference between God and men. The essence of man's moral life is given in the two great commandments, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. God's love is infinitely greater than human love, but unless divine and human love are the same in kind, the basis of all loving communion with God is destroyed. The difference is only in degree. God is omnipotent, but is there any limit to the power of man when once he has taken hold of the power of God? "With God all things are possible."[1] God is omniscient, but is there any limit to what man can learn of God's truth, any place at which it shall be said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further? Rather is it not true that the Spirit of God shall guide us into all the truth?[2] God is righteous, but St. Paul teaches that man's only righteousness is derived from the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ.[3] God is blessed, but man is to share in the divine blessedness. God is eternal, but "this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God."[4] God wills to give Himself to men. The fundamental difference cannot be found in what are known as the attributes of God.

The difference is to be found rather in the *source* of the attributes. From God are all things. God is love, righteousness, power, knowledge, blessedness, life eternal. In God are all the qualities of perfect life. And He wills to give all these to men. God gives all, man receives all. "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine." God is Creator, who out of His love creates man in His

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[1]Mark 10:27; Matt. 19:26.
[2]John 16:13.
[3]Rom. 3:22.
[4]John 17:3.

image. Man is the creature, created in the divine image, and destined to realize the divine likeness. God is the Father who out of His love brings forth His children. Men are sons of God, heirs of God, receiving the fullness of their Father's life. The one and only and ineradicable difference is the difference of source.

Let us not for a moment suppose that this conception makes man a *thing,* a slave, or that it deprives him of his freedom. True love wills to create after its own image, and the image of love is not to be found in things but in Persons. Love is not satisfied in creating slaves. Love seeks for love, and the love that it seeks can be found only in love that is produced by freedom and not by force. Deep calleth unto deep. The depth of divine love can be satisfied only when it is answered out of the depth of man's free being. God wills children and not slaves. We are not true to the thought of God's creative love if we suppose that that love is satisfied unless it brings forth men to be the free children of their heavenly Father. If we are truly the creatures of God, we are free sons in our Father's house.

As all true human love is made in the image of the divine love, surely we can see in human love this same power to create after its likeness. The son who has caught any glimpse of a mother's love, knows that that love has not made him a *thing,* a slave. It has brought forth in him the answering love which is the very heart of freedom. The husband finds in his wife's love the power that calls him to be himself, and leads him on the road to free and noble manhood. Everywhere love creates after its kind. We experience the mystery of that free creation in all the sacred relationships of life. And he who believes that God is love finds in the divine love the supreme creative source of human life.

The creative love of God wills to create His children after His own likeness, to give to them all that belongs to Himself. The one and only and ineradicable difference is that of source.

The Scholastics expressed this thought by saying that God alone has *aseity.* He is *a se,* from Himself. Man is *a Deo,* from God. God is self-existent, man's existence comes from God. God imparts all to man, except that one quality of self-existence which is inherent in His own being. God is forever God, the eternal Source, the eternal Giver. Man is forever the creature, the child, of God, eternally receiving all that God's creative love can give.

If this one difference between God and man be kept clear in mind, then all other differences can be set aside, or reduced to differences merely in degree. Man can receive the fullness of God, can partake of all that belongs to the divine life. And yet there is no danger of confusing God and man, of putting man in the place of God, of worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator.[1] There is no place for the Greek jealousy of the gods. God is always above man, always the source of man's life. Man can never *be* God. But just for that reason all other differences can be swept away. Man is called to the highest, to realize the divine sonship, to partake of the divine fire, to enter into the holiest. And in entering into the life of God, man need give up nothing that belongs to his highest and noblest self. He need not, as in pantheistic union with God, lose his personal life, sink into an ecstatic swoon. He is most himself when nearest God. He finds himself, not loses himself, in finding God. He sees God face to face, and his life is preserved.

[1]Rom. 1:25.

VII

In this concept of the creative God, of the divine aseity, of the heavenly Father, is to be found the perfect union of man's humility and man's boldness. Man is absolutely humble because all that he has and is comes from God. But man is absolutely bold because all that God has and is comes to man. Man is incapable of self-conceit, because he knows that he is nothing without God. But he wins dignity and courage because he knows that he is not without God. He is called to be a son of God, and he dares aspire to the dignity of that high calling. Nothing is too great for a son of God to ask and to expect.

These two elements find striking expression in the fifty-first Psalm. There is first the note of confession, of self abnegation.

"I acknowledge my transgressions:
And my sin is ever before me.
Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
And done that which is evil in thy sight."

And then out of the abnegation comes the confidence in the divine power.

"Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts:
And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Make me to hear joy and gladness:
That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice."[1]

And this union of humility and aspiration so strikingly foreshadowed in the Hebrew thought, reaches full expres-

[1] Psa. 51:3-8.

sion in the Christian confidence in God. Before the vision of the heavenly Father, of the creative Love, self-conceit becomes impossible. But in that same vision self-confidence based on confidence in God becomes supreme, and man in his humility aspires to the divine life. These two elements are finely expressed in the so-called "Prayer of Humble Access" in the Communion Office of the Prayer Book. "We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table." Then out of the self-abnegation comes the boldness of the petition. "But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us." Out of the confession of our unworthiness even to gather up the crumbs, comes the prayer that we may sit as honored guests at the very Table of the Lord, and may be partakers of the heavenly food.

In all true moral life humility and courage go hand in hand. Self-conceit and cowardice are close companions. Every schoolboy knows that the football player with the "big head" is the first to lose his nerve. The general of an army, absolutely sure that he is the best man for the place, is not the one who deserves his country's confidence. The self-conceited man, confident only in his own abilities, loses heart at the first sign of failure. The humble man seeks strength and finds it. Accepting a trust committed to his charge, he cares nothing about the possibility of his own failure, but gives himself courageously to his task. There

is a false and pretentious humility which is but veiled self-conceit. But true humility is true dignity, and goes hand in hand with courage and strength. And the religious basis for that union is given in the Christian belief in God the Creator and Source of human life. Relying on the creative God, man wins his true dignity, for in God are all things, and from God come all things.[1]

VIII

These two elements of the thought of God which we have been considering, His supremacy and His nearness, are often expressed as the divine transcendence and the divine immanence. The trouble with these terms is that they tend to be taken in a spatial sense. Transcendence suggests God as spatially apart from the world, seated on a distant throne in heaven. Immanence suggests God as spatially present in the universe, a kind of diffused substance. And then the attempt is made to combine the two ideas in a kind of *tertium quid,* the main characteristic of which is apt to be its vagueness. God is somehow or other apart from the world and yet in the world; the two statements are left unreconciled. We avoid the difficulty by being true to the Christian thought, by expressing the idea of God in purely moral terms. Spatial terms have no

[1]William James, with his deep insight into the nature of religion, rightly demanded that all religious truths should have "pragmatic" value, value for life. It is therefore somewhat remarkable that among the terms ascribed to God which he considered could have no religious value, he included the phrase "*a se.*" (*Pragmatism,* p. 121.) That even he should have failed to see the "pragmatic" elements of the idea of aseity, emphasizes the necessity that theology should speak in a "tongue understanded of the people."

application to Him. He is creative love, the source of all that is true and right in human life. Therein is maintained the element of His transcendence. But as creative love He creates man after His image, He gives to man the fullness of the divine life. Therein is maintained the element of his immanence. The Master of life gives Himself to men, who are His offspring. The heavenly Father brings forth His children, that they may be in perfect unity with Himself.

No other religious concept succeeds in bringing together so closely the idea of God and of man. Pantheism, as we have seen, signally fails to do so. It unites God and man at the cost of man's personal life. It was just this pantheistic background which produced difficulty when the doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ was worked out in the early Church. The purpose of the doctrine was to think of Jesus Christ as the union of God and man. Christion belief saw in Him the fullness of the Godhead bodily.[1] But it was forced to express that belief in terms of the Greco-Roman world. And those terms did not succeed in bringing God and man together. While the Christian belief always explicitly asserted the divine-humanity of Jesus, yet its theology did not do full justice to His humanity. In asserting the divinity of Christ, it obscured His manhood; it was jealous lest His divinity should not come to full expression. Gradually the humanity of Jesus, while asserted in words, became unreal in thought. Mediaeval theology, seeking human contact with God, set up the worship of the Virgin and of the saints, that it might find in them the humanity which it could no longer find in Jesus. We must avoid all this difficulty by being true to

[1]Col. 2:9.

the moral thought of God and of His relation to men. And that is to be true to the thought of Christ Himself. In His teaching that God is our heavenly Father, that God is creative Love, we find the basis for the complete union between God and man. If we are to understand the divine-humanity of Jesus, we must understand the terms divine and human as He understood them. If we are to know Him as the God-Man, we must interpret the words God and man in accordance with His teaching.

IX

So to understand those terms has been the purpose of this discussion. Let me briefly review the course of our thought. In order to understand the divine-humanity of Jesus, we asked, first, what we mean by "divine" and by "human." Then we emphasized the necessity of understanding those terms as Jesus understood them. For that purpose we glanced at the Hebrew background of His thought, the belief in God as Creator, a belief which at the same time brought God into close and living relation with men, His creatures. We contrasted that belief with the Greek concept of God as substance, which, whether in its polytheism or in its pantheism, was unable to make any clear distinction between God and man, and thus was unable to conceive of God and man as united. In the teaching of Jesus we saw that the Hebrew belief in God as Creator was carried out fully into the moral thought of God as creative Love. In that concept is made possible the perfect unity of God and man, as God creates His own children in His own likeness, and gives to them the fullness of His own life. If, then, we ask what, according to Christian thought, is the difference between God and man,

we find that that difference is not to be found in the divine attributes, but in the source of those attributes. God is *a se,* from Himself. Man is *a Deo,* from God. With that difference maintained, all other differences may be set aside, and God and man can come into perfect union. This concept of the creative God unites man's humility with his boldness to ask God for the highest. It reconciles the ideas of transcendence and immanence, and brings God and man into a unity which is not realized by any other religious concept. And this result we reach by being true to the Christian belief in God, the concept taught by Christ Himself. We are to understand His divine-humanity by His own teaching about divine and human.

In all this we have considered only the general ideas of God and of man, and of those ideas as leading to the complete unity of divine and human. We now have to consider that unity as accomplished in Jesus. The historic realization of that unity in Jesus Christ is the Incarnation.

CHAPTER III

WHAT IS THE INCARNATION?

I

Christianity is a religion of history. And by that I mean that to Christian faith, history, the current of human life, is of direct religious significance and value. The relation between God and man is not merely an ideal relation, but is one that is expressed in history, and that is supremely realized in the historic Person of Jesus Christ. God reveals Himself in the history of man, and the apex and goal of that history is Jesus Christ, and humanity conformed to His image. Christianity is a religion of history.

Now it has been maintained that this emphasis upon history is unnecessary, and that it is false to the nature of religion. Religion seeks communion with the living God. It is concerned with present reality, not with past events. Why ask what happened in Palestine nearly two thousand years ago? Let the dead past bury its dead. We are concerned with the living present. God and the soul stand sure. The teachings ascribed to Jesus are of inestimable value to us, and that value is retained no matter what doubts we may have as to their source. Why complicate Christian faith with questions about the Person of Jesus? Can such questions have more than an antiquarian interest? Of what religious value to-day can be the history of the past?

Such an attitude was represented by Lessing in his famous essay, *The Education of the Human Race.* To Lessing history is the means through which men are educated, brought into possession of ideas which are themselves independent of the history through which they come. It is to these ideas alone that true religious value can be attached. The same position was represented by Strauss in his *Life of Jesus.* Strauss although writing a life of Jesus was not deeply interested in the facts of His life, but rather with the myths that had gathered around the Person of Jesus and with the religious value of those myths. This value was independent of the Person of Jesus Himself. In America, Theodore Parker was influenced by Strauss, and in his *Discourse on the Transient and Permanent in Christianity,* said: "If it could be proved—as it cannot—in opposition to the greatest amount of historical evidence ever collected on any similar point, that the gospels were the fabrication of designing and artful men, that Jesus of Nazareth had never lived, still Christianity would stand firm, and fear no evil. None of the doctrines of that religion would fall to the ground, for if true, they stand by themselves. But we should lose—oh, irreparable loss!—the example of that character, so beautiful, so divine, that no human genius could have conceived it, as none, after all the progress and refinement of eighteen centuries, seems fully to have comprehended its lustrous life."[1]

It is somewhat difficult for us now to appreciate the turmoil that was aroused in the Unitarian Churches by this carefully guarded statement of Parker, together with his general attitude as to the historic background of Christian truth. At a meeting of the Boston Association of Uni-

[1] *Discourse,* etc. Second edition. Boston. Printed for the author. 1841. p. 18f.

tarian ministers held in 1843 it is reported that one member said: "The difference between Trinitarians and Unitarians is a difference in Christianity; the difference between Mr. Parker and the Association is a difference between no Christianity and Christianity."[1] Yet now this position of Parker is widely held, and it is commonly maintained that historic facts cannot have essential religious value.

This view has been largely represented by so-called "speculative" types of theology, using the method of Hegel's logic. To Hegel himself history was of great importance, for history is the expression of the Absolute Spirit. But to many of the followers of Hegel, history became only the medium, and the more or less imperfect medium, through which certain ideas as to the relation between God and man came to consciousness. Jesus is the one in whom first the relation with God attains clear expression. But, that expression once realized, the truth for which it stands becomes independent of Jesus Himself. Jesus is the ladder by which we have attained a certain height. But, our feet once firm upon the rock which we have reached, we can throw down the ladder by which we climbed, and can allow it to decay. Our footing is still secure. The Person of Jesus becomes of merely transitory importance.

This thought has often been expressed by the difference between "the Christ" and "Jesus," "the Christ" being interpreted as the eternal principle by which the life of God is manifested to men, and "Jesus" being the one in whom that manifestation reached, on the whole, its fullest and clearest expression. The Christ-idea is represented as

[1] *Theodore Parker, Preacher and Reformer*, by John White Chadwick, p. 118.

independent of the Person, Jesus, in whom it first came to realization. History is but the means through which certain ideas of God and man came to consciousness. True Christianity must deal with those ideas, rather than with the forms in which they were expressed. Christianity becomes a religion of ideas, rather than a religion founded on a historic fact which is of essential and permanent significance and value.

II

I have dwelt at some length on this attitude, not only because of its widespread character, but also because it contains certain elements of truth which are of great importance, and the value of which we should gladly recognize. Christian faith is not concerned merely with past events. If in its contents it includes past events, it is because those events are of permanent value and have essential meaning for us to-day. Orthodoxy that is concerned only with the past is an orthodoxy that is dead. To believe with all accuracy certain statements about the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus does not in itself constitute Christian faith. Faith becomes truly Christian only when it is faith that through the historic Person of Jesus we are admitted into a new and living relationship with God. It is not facts alone with which we are concerned, but with the ideal meaning and value and the permanent power of those facts. The ideal element which this tendency we have been considering has emphasized must at all costs be retained.

But this tendency does more than seek to maintain this ideal element. It also seeks to separate that element from the historic facts through which it came to realization. It

seeks to give a Christianity apart from Christ, or at any rate apart from Jesus. It abandons the value of history, and yet tries to preserve the value of the ideal truths which that history expresses.

In considering this position we might well maintain, first of all, that a Christianity apart from the historic Christ is not Christianity in the historic sense of that word. From the beginning, Christian faith has looked to Jesus not only as its Founder, not only as a revealer of truth, but as an essential element of its contents. The New Testament centers around the Person of Jesus, and the Christian Church has looked to Him not only as teacher, but as Lord and Master. It has held fast to the conviction that "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."[1] It has believed that if that foundation were destroyed, the edifice would crumble.

Yet, true as this is, it would not of course be a final answer to our problem. It is conceivable that the historic may not be of fundamental value, and that it ought to be abandoned. Unwelcome though that position may be, yet it is conceivable that we might be forced to hold it. What we want is the truth, and if truth calls us to abandon the historic, then Christian faith must meet the test. In short, we must examine this attitude on its merits, and not condemn it simply because it contradicts former standards.

It does not seem difficult to show that this non-historical attitude does not really retain religious values. It is easy to say that such value lies only in an idea, divorced from the historic process through which it came. But as a matter of fact no idea can be divorced from its history and still retain its full meaning. It is not a satisfactory defi-

[1] I Cor. 3:11.

nition of a horse to give such an account as that of the schoolboy in Dickens' *Hard Times*: "Quadruped, Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely, twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive," and so on. You have not truly defined a horse unless you see him as the product of evolution, unless you trace his origin and development in the animal world. The Gradgrind demand for "facts" is not satisfied unless the fact is understood through the process by which it came to be. The only definition that really tells what a horse is, or what any fact is, is a definition in terms of evolution. And evolution is simply history, the process which lies behind a fact, and which alone interprets the meaning of that fact.

Above all, when we turn to human life, to the things that concern the spirit of man, it is supremely true that we can understand them only through the history of the human life that lies behind them and of which they are the outcome. For history is not a dead thing. The current of human life flows from the past into the present. The spirit of the past becomes incarnate in the present, and the present can be known only through its past. Who can understand the spirit of America apart from the history which has made America what it is? A cross-section of America to-day leaves America not explained and not understood. To know America we must know Washington and Lincoln. They are not dead. They still live in the spirit of the free country which they helped to found and to preserve.

One danger of our times is that we seek to solve the problems of the present without due regard to the past. The world is so new and our problems are so insistent that we are tempted to suppose that we can offhand invent new solutions. But no solution can be sound that does not

understand the present in the light of the past which has made it what it is. A cure requires diagnosis, and the diagnosis of our ills demands a knowledge of their cause. And that cause can be found only in history, for only through history can the present be understood. And the diagnosis can lead to a cure, not by trying to reproduce the past, but by applying its lessons to the present and the future. For the past was itself a development, a progress, and the right understanding of it will give the key to the development and the progress which the present so insistently demands.

It seems, therefore, a mere abstraction to separate religious ideas from the historic persons or events through which those ideas came into the world. It has been said that there is no such thing as *religion,* there are only *religions.* And that saying, while one-sided and not altogether true, yet contains a very great truth. Religion as a power in the world has not existed in the form of abstract religious ideas, but in definite concrete forms of religious life. Above all, the supreme religious forces have come through men in whose character and life religious ideas have found expression. It is sometimes said that it is ideas which rule the world. But there are millions of excellent ideas stored away on musty pages of forgotten books on the shelves of disused libraries. What moves the world are not ideas but ideas incarnate in men. When a man gets hold of an idea, or rather when an idea gets hold of a man, seizes him, incarnates itself in him, then the idea has all the power of a personal life. The great powers are not abstract ideas or ideals, they are *persons.* An idea that has forced itself into human life through a person, becomes a living part of history, and cannot be separated from the person through whom it came to birth.

It is supremely true that the Christian values cannot be separated from Him in whom those values became flesh. The power of Christian faith has been the power of a personal life that reveals God. The Christian relation between God and man expressed only in the abstract terms of a mere idea, becomes pale and weak. Expressed and realized in the historic Person of Jesus Christ, it becomes full of life and power. To separate the idea from the Person in whom it is enshrined is to miss the value and meaning of the idea itself.[1]

The whole question may be put in another form. The question whether history can have religious significance and value depends on what we mean by history. If history be but a succession of disconnected events, mere accidents or happenings, then indeed it can have no religious meaning. But if history be the process of human life through which God is revealed, through which God comes into contact with the life of man, then history becomes of supreme religious meaning. I remember speaking to a company of ministers and teachers on how to teach the Old Testament to children. I maintained that we should emphasize the thought that the Old Testament deals with the special history which prepared the way for Christ, and that in that fact the Old Testament has its Christian value. In the discussion that followed, a clergyman said with some

[1]James Martineau writes: "Nothing is so sickly, so paralytic, so desolate as 'Moral Ideals' that are nothing else: like a pale and beautiful ecstatica that can only look down, and whisper dreams, and show the sacred stigmata, they cannot will or act or love; and their whole power is in abeyance till they present themselves in a living personal being, who secures the righteousness of the universe and seeks the sanctification of each heart." *A Study of Religion*, vol. 2, p. 34. It seems strange that Martineau failed to apply these principles to the Person of Jesus.

vehemence: "I disagree with the speaker. He holds that the Old Testament is a book of history. I hold that it is a book of revelation." The misunderstanding came as a surprise. When I spoke of history as preparing the way for Christ, I took it for granted that that preparation in history was the way of God's revelation. History *is* revelation. To that thought we must return shortly. Here it need only be said that if the living God is to make Himself known to men, He must do so in and through the life of men. It is in history that God is known, and from that fact history derives its permanent value and significance for religion.

If, indeed, religion concerns only the world to come, then it may not need history. If religion is only to furnish an escape from earth and to prepare men for heaven, then it would seem of small importance whether or not God were manifested in the course of this world. For example, it has been generally characteristic of the religions of India that religion has been regarded as a means of escape from this world with all its evils. The purpose has not been to transform this world, but to get away from it. And it is no accident that India has attached no importance to history. Of what value is this current of human life when the very purpose of religion is to get away from that current? God need not be manifested in history if the relation with God is to draw men out of history.

In vivid contrast stands the religion of Israel. God was revealed in the upbuilding of the commonwealth of Israel, in the bringing forth of justice and righteousness among men. Therefore to Israel history was full of meaning. The prophet looked forward to the fulfilment of that meaning when the day of the Lord should come, and God's purposes should be accomplished upon earth.

Now if Christianity be only to prepare men for heaven, it can be content with a non-historical relation with God, with finding God merely in ideas or ideals. But if an essential part of the Christian purpose is to bring heaven down to earth, to transform this world into the kingdom of God, then the question whether God can be and has been manifested in history becomes of the utmost importance. Can we find God in this life, or must we go outside of this life to find God? Is human history of no account to Him? Or is His moral will directed to upbuilding a righteous commonwealth on earth? Can we find the deepest incentive to make this world over according to the divine standard, according to the pattern showed us in the Mount of God, unless we believe that we have God with us in our task? And if so must we not seek to find in human history the witness of the divine presence and the divine purpose? Must not the course of human history be of supreme religious significance if we are seeking to bring to pass God's kingdom on earth?

In short, the non-historical conception of religion does not correspond to the belief in God as a moral Being. If we believe that God is righteous love, then we shall be sure that God is seeking to bring to pass righteousness and love among men. And we shall seek in human history the presence and the power of God.

I return then to the statement that Christianity is a religion of history. It believes that the relation between God and man is not merely an ideal relation, but is one that is manifested in history, and that is fully realized in the historic Person of Jesus Christ. God reveals Himself in history, and the apex and goal of that history is Jesus Christ and humanity conformed to His image. That belief is belief in the Incarnation. This is the belief which we

have to consider, and which it is our task to try to express in the terms of our own thought to-day.

III

Perhaps the best method of approach will be through the idea of revelation. I have already suggested that the Christian concept of revelation is that God is revealed in history, in the current of human life. Let us examine this thought more closely.

The primary question is, How is God known? How does He come into contact with human life? And in saying that God is known through revelation, it may seem that thereby the knowledge of God is put on a plane by itself, and is taken out of relation to knowledge in other fields. The word revelation thus tends to become unreal, and our knowledge of God to be considered as radically different from our knowledge of nature or our knowledge of our friends.

Yet, rightly considered, the idea of revelation enters into every kind of knowledge. Ask the fundamental question, How do we know anything? And it is a pretty clear result of modern philosophy that all knowledge comes through experience. We know anything only by coming into connection with it and having experience of it. Of course the nature of the knowing mind reacts on the experience and determines to a great extent what the experience is. If I write on blotting paper, the result is different from what it is if I write on glazed paper. A dog may have the same environment as a man, but the capacity of receiving is different. To say that all knowledge comes through experience is not to deny the activity of the mind in shaping and molding that which the senses receive. This is the truth permanently secured to philosophy by Kant. But it

is also true, as Kant maintained, that the mind must have data on which to work, and that without experience there is no knowledge.

Take a simple example. There could be no botany except through our experience of flowers. The mind reacts on that experience, arranges and correlates it, and thus opens up the way for further experience. But only through experience is the primary knowledge which makes botany possible. Astronomy exists only if the stars are experienced. By our eyes, assisted by the telescope, we get the knowledge which makes astronomy possible. Flowers and stars can be known only through experience.

Now it would be an unusual use of language to say that flowers and stars can be known only through revelation. Yet revelation and experience are but names for different aspects of the same thing. Flowers and stars are known only as they reveal themselves, as they are experienced. Without that revelation or that experience knowledge is impossible.

The term revelation becomes less strange when we apply it to our knowledge of persons. How does a child come to know his mother? Only as the mother reveals herself to him. The child must have experience of his mother, experiences that come through sight, sound, touch. But through these sensations the mother reveals herself, and the child knows her care, her patience, her love. Our friends reveal themselves to us through our senses, and through our sensations we have experience of what our friends really are. Experience and revelation are but different names for the same thing. The experience of reality is the revelation of reality.

When, therefore, it is said that God is known only through revelation, that is only to state a truth that holds

for all knowledge. We can know God only as in some way we have experience of God, and that experience is on its outward side God's revelation of himself to men.

The distinction between "natural" and "revealed" religion must be given up. If religion implies any relation with God, any knowledge of God, then religion can exist only as God is experienced or revealed. The religion may be very incomplete, but if it have any truth at all, that truth must have its source in the revelation of God.[1]

IV

How then is God revealed? Partly through nature. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." Familiar enough are the arguments for the divine existence which are derived from nature, the cosmological argument, inferring God as the cause of the world, the teleological argument inferring God from the plan of the world. Whatever value these arguments may have lies in the fact that nature may be to some extent the revelation of God, the means through which God speaks. The arguments are interpretations of our experience of God derived through nature. The only true meaning for "natural religion" is that God is to some extent revealed in nature.

Yet nature can only partially reveal God. The heavens declare the glory of God, but they cannot declare His character. The plan of nature may show His intelligence, but it cannot reveal His love. Nature is full of horrors, "red in tooth and claw." Through nature alone we can never know God as our heavenly Father.

[1]Coleridge repeatedly emphasized the thought that the phrase "revealed religion" is a pleonasm.

"Know, man hath all which Nature hath, but more,
And in that *more* lie all his hopes of good.
Nature is cruel, man is sick of blood;
Nature is stubborn, man would fain adore.

. . . . . .

Man must begin, know this, where Nature ends;
Nature and man can never be fast friends.
Fool, if thou canst not pass her, rest her slave."[1]

If God is a moral, a personal Being, He cannot be fully revealed in *things*. He can be revealed only in persons. Not nature but man must be the only way in which we can fully experience the life and being of God. It is only in life that the living and loving God can reveal His true character and being.

Here we come to the parting of the ways so far as concerns the idea of revelation. When God has been thought of as impersonal substance, the underlying basis of nature, in short where pantheism has prevailed, then revelation has been thought of as taking place through impersonal means, through something below the human. So it was largely in the religions of Greece and Rome. God was revealed in signs and omens, through thunder on the right hand or on the left, through the flight of birds, by the sacred chickens, in the entrails of sacrificial victims. Or if revealed through men or women, it was as they sank below the level of full personal life. The messages came in dreams, in mystic utterance, through ecstasy or swoon, in which the priest or priestess became the unconscious instrument for the divine influence.

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[1]Matthew Arnold, *In Harmony with Nature.*

In strong contrast stands the religion of the Old Testament. There God is thought of as a moral, a righteous, a personal, God, and the revelation of God comes preëminently through human life. Of course the religion of Israel emerged only slowly from the nature religions among which it had its birth, and naturally we find traces of lower forms of thought; dreams and ecstatic visions play a part. But their part is utterly subordinate to the belief that God was revealed in life. Through persons God's word was spoken. And it came to persons not in remoteness of life, but as leaders of life. Moses, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, these men were patriots and statesmen, men standing in the market-place, and proclaiming the divine will of justice and righteousness and truth. "Thus saith the Lord" was the utterance not of the recluse, but of men in the vigor of their strength and in deep contact with life. Through these prophets came the revelation of the living God.

And not only in individual prophets here and there came the word of God. Israel felt that the whole nation was the means of God's revelation, that God's character was to be revealed in the upbuilding of a righteous commonwealth, where the justice and truth and mercy of God should form the basis of a human society reflecting and revealing the divine life. And Israel looked forward to the coming of the Day of the Lord, when under the anointed King all should know the Lord, and His Spirit should be poured out on all flesh.

When we turn to the New Testament, it is essentially in life that God is manifested. The New Testament is the story of a Life that reveals God. The gospel begins with the teaching of Jesus. And He becomes to His followers the essential contents of the message which He taught.

The beginning of the apostolic preaching is that Jesus is the Christ. His followers find in Him the reality of the kingdom which is to manifest the ways of God. St. Paul resolved to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.[1] To him Christ is the image of the invisible God.[2] To St. John He is the Word of God become flesh. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him.[3] He that hath seen him hath seen the Father.[4]

It is notable that in the whole New Testament, with the exception of the Revelation, which, being cast in the popular apocalyptic form, demands treatment by itself, there is small value set upon the idea of revelation through signs or omens, or through the subconscious or ecstatic state. It is to be sure true that the Apostles are said to have cast lots to discover the divine will as to which of two should take the place of Judas.[5] But the instance stands alone. It is true that St. Paul had by night a vision of a man from Macedonia calling to him.[6] But the vision cannot be separated from his waking thoughts and aspirations. It is true that once St. Paul, whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell, felt himself caught up into the third heaven. But it is also true that we get no content from his experience. All that he heard were "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."[7] The Paul who brings to us the message of the gospel is not the ecstatic visionary, but the missionary in contact with life,

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[1] I Cor. 2:2.
[2] Col. 1:15.
[3] John 1:14-18.
[4] John 14:9.
[5] Acts 1:26.
[6] Acts 16:9.
[7] II Cor. 12:1-4.

upon whom rests the care of all the Churches, the man who writes his letters with the fullest use of all his spiritual and mental powers. He lightly esteemed the ecstatic gift of tongues, for by it the understanding was unfruitful and the Church was not edified. He declared that he would rather speak five words with his understanding, that he might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.[1] The revelation of God comes through persons, through life at its highest and its best. And the supreme Life, the supreme Person, is Jesus Christ. He is the divine message, the Word of God.

To know God we must have experience of God, God must be revealed. And if God be a moral Being He can be revealed only through moral beings. God, the personal God of righteousness and love, has made man in His image, and He can be revealed only through the image which He has made.

It is a commonplace of modern theories of education that teaching cannot be by telling. A child does not know arithmetic if he is simply told it, or if he reads it in a book. Learning comes through contact. Numbers must be learned through numbers. Doing must be added to listening, the laboratory must supplement the textbook. The simplest truths can be known only through contact with the truth itself. Most of all is this true of things that pertain to the spirit of man. No textbook about literature can take the place of Shakespeare and Milton. Who can describe in words the Venus of Milo? The most accurate and minute analysis of a symphony does not make the orchestra unnecessary. We are taught only through being in touch with reality. And God knows at least as much

[1] I Cor. 14:12-19.

pedagogy as we do. He might have tried to reveal Himself in words. He might have written the most perfect system of theology, and handed it down from heaven. He might have dictated a book of infallible sentences telling of His essence and His attributes. And small good would it have done, little should we have learned about God. He is a wiser Teacher than that. He revealed Himself by giving Himself. He spoke His message, His Word, in and through human life. In that Word was Life, and the Life was the light of men.[1] Wherever there has been human life, there has been some revelation of the divine, to some degree God's Word has been spoken. And the full message was in Him in whom "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth."[2] The revelation of God is in the Incarnate Life.

The word "revelation" is sometimes regarded as a weak and inadequate word to describe the Incarnation. To say that in Jesus God is revealed, is felt not to do full justice to the Christian belief in the Divinity, the Deity, of Christ. But the objection comes from too low an idea of revelation. It is taken for granted that the revelation of God is a revelation only of truths about God, of statements concerning Him. But no such statements can truly reveal God. God is revealed only as He is *given.* To know Him we must not only know *about Him,* we must know *Him.* He must give Himself, must give the deepest of His being. And if God be moral, then the depth of His being is His character. To know the essence of God is to know His character, His purpose, His will. And they are given in Jesus Christ. The Father is revealed, is given, in His

[1] John 1:4.
[2] John 1:14.

Son. That is the Incarnation. The Word has become flesh. God has given Himself in Jesus Christ, and in Jesus Christ we see God in the life of man. He is the God-Man.

V

In the last chapter I considered the phrase God-Man, and emphasized the thought that its meaning depends on the meaning of the terms God and man, the meaning of the words divine and human. And as we are dealing with the *Christian* belief in the God-Man, it is essential that those terms be given their Christian meaning. We considered that meaning, as based on the Hebrew prophetic teaching that God is Creator, a teaching which reaches its full results in our Lord's belief in the divine Fatherhood. In the belief in God our Father, the creative idea of God is carried over into the fullness of creative Love. God is the absolute source of all that is true and right, and man as the son of God receives the fullness of God's gifts. The difference between God and man is not a difference in attributes, but in source. God gives all, and man can receive all. The Christian belief in God and in man leads to the belief in the complete unity of God and man. The accomplishment of that unity in Jesus Christ is the Incarnation.

It seems, then, evident that the Incarnation cannot be an isolated event in human history. It is the outcome of God's purpose, the realization of the divine will. But God has always been God, and God's will is not changing. With Him is "no variation neither shadow that is cast by turning."[1] He has always sought to give Himself to man,

[1] James 1:17.

to utter His Word in human life, to bring to pass the unity of God and man which is the purpose of His creative love. The Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ carries us back to all history before Christ, as the preparation for His coming, and carries us forward to all history after Christ, as the working out of the divine purpose to sum up all things in Christ, until God shall be all in all.[1] Let us consider more fully these two thoughts, the preparation for the Incarnation, and the effect of the Incarnation.

It is no accident that the first verse of the fourth Gospel takes us back to the first verse of Genesis. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." St. John has this verse in mind, and as it were comments on it. Yes, and "in the beginning was the Word. . . . All things were made through him." He was the instrument of creation. He was the means by which God revealed Himself to man. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended [or overcame] it not." And this previous revelation of God's Word, imperfectly received, has now been summed up in Him in whom the Word has become flesh.

It is not necessary to decide the question as to the sources of St. John's doctrine of the Word, the Logos. There is much in the Old Testament that might serve as a basis. The word of God is there thought of as God's instrument in creation and in revelation. Analogous is the doctrine of the Spirit of God, the Spirit which seized on the prophets, and by whose inspiration they spoke the divine message. Again, the doctrine of the Wisdom of

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[1]Eph. 1:10. I Cor. 15:28.

God, as in the book of Proverbs, makes Wisdom the active principle of the life of God in creation:

"The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way,
Before his works of old.
I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,
Or ever the earth was.

* * *

When he marked out the foundations of the earth:
Then I was by him, as a master workman:
And I was daily his delight,
Rejoicing always before him;
Rejoicing in his habitable earth;
And my delight was with the sons of men."[1]

The same thought is even more fully developed in the book of Wisdom, in the Apocrypha.

"For she is a breath of the power of God,
And a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty;

* * *

An unspotted mirror of the working of God,
And an image of his goodness.

* * *

And from generation to generation passing into holy souls
She maketh men friends of God, and prophets."[2]

God has been manifesting Himself through His Word, His Spirit, His Wisdom.

Moreover we find in Greek philosophy the concept of the Logos or Reason as the underlying principle of the life of

[1]Prov. 8:22-31.
[2]Wisdom 7:25-27.

the world. And the Jew Philo had united Greek philosophy with the Old Testament in his teaching that the Logos is a second God, the eternal mediator between God and the world.

To whatever source St. John owes his doctrine of the Word, at any rate he brings to it the one great thought that all this preëxistent divine activity is summed up in Jesus Christ. All that God has been seeking to show of Himself in the world and in man is now summed up in its fullness in Him who is the Word of God incarnate.

The fourth Gospel is the only part of the New Testament in which the actual phrase the Word of God is used in this sense. But we find essentially the same thought in St. Paul, perhaps most fully expressed in the Epistle to the Colossians. The Son "is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist."[1] And the unknown author of the Epistle to the Hebrews begins with the words: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, [*or* a Son] whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds." And the same author applies to the Son the saying of the Psalmist:

> "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation
> of the earth,
> And the heavens are the works of thy hands."[2]

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[1] Col. 1:15-17.
[2] Hebrews 1:1-2, 10.

The thought is not essentially different from that of St. John. That which St. John calls the Word, these writers call the Son. And the Son, the instrument of God's creation and revelation, is now known to us in Jesus Christ.

Let us now try to make use of these results and to give them an expression for ourselves. The central thought in the Christian belief in the Incarnation is that the revelation of God, the Word of God, is through human life, and that in the Person of Jesus the revelation of God is given in its completeness, that in Him God's Word is fully uttered. But this thought carries us back to all history before Christ. God has always been giving His Word to men. Wherever men have known something of God's truth, something of God's will, there the Word of God has found an entrance, however imperfectly, into human life. Through prophet and psalmist and lawgiver of Israel God's Word has been given. In the life of Israel as a nation God's truth and righteousness and mercy were revealed in the upbuilding of a righteous commonwealth that should manifest the divine character and the divine will. And not only in Israel did God's Word find expression. Whatever has been known of God's truth has come from God, has been the utterance of God's Word. He has not left Himself without witness. The religions of the world have been not only cravings after God, they have been revelations of God. There the Word of God has been spoken, although men have been only imperfectly able to comprehend it. The prophet Malachi may have had a foregleam of this truth: "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name

is great among the Gentiles, saith the LORD of hosts."[1] Christian thought has been slow to rise to the fullness of this belief. Yet the early Christian writers referred all the truth of the Gentile world to the working of the divine Logos or Reason. Later Christian thought largely allowed these ideas to disappear, and separated sharply between "sacred" and "profane" history. But no history is "profane," for no history has been without God. There has always been some utterance of the divine Word, some preparation for the fullness of the time, when God sent forth His own Son, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We might speak of all history before Christ as the partial incarnation of the Word. Whether it is better so to use the term incarnation, or to restrict it to the full utterance of the Word in Jesus Christ, may well be a matter of opinion. At any rate the truth is clear that if God be the living God, the God who out of His infinite love seeks to give Himself to men, then that giving has always been taking place. God has always given just as far as man was capable of receiving. The Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ is no isolated event. It carries us back to all history before Christ.

It also carries us on to all history after Christ. The unity of God and man accomplished in Christ Jesus is the result of the divine purpose. But that divine purpose concerns all humanity. That which was accomplished in Jesus Christ is through Him to become true for those who are conformed to His image, that He may be the firstborn

[1]Mal. 1:11. The rendering *shall be* instead of *is* in the Authorized Version has obscured the meaning of this passage. In any case the meaning is not quite clear. The reference may be to the worship carried on by Jews of the Dispersion.

among many brethren.[1] We too are to receive the adoption of sons. "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father."[2] The purpose of God in Christ is a purpose for all humanity. The unity of God and man accomplished in Christ is the will of our heavenly Father, whose love creates after its own image. God wills all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.[3] And Jesus Christ Himself is the way, the truth, and the life.[4] The purpose of God in His Son can be fulfilled only in the upbuilding of the body of Christ, until we all attain unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.[5] The belief in the Incarnation calls us to believe in the incarnate life of humanity through Christ.

Here indeed is the very heart of every Christian doctrine. We come back to the principle stated in the first chapter. Every Christian doctrine about God must be capable of application to and expression in the life of man. God is love, and love creates after its own image. God is the Giver, and all that He has and is He gives to man. The supreme expression of that truth is in the Incarnation. Through the incarnate Christ God gives Himself to man. Jesus is the God-Man, and in Him begins for humanity the incarnate life.

It hardly needs to be said that the view here presented is in full agreement with those theologians who regard the Incarnation as essential to humanity, as the realization of the eternal purpose of God. I cannot consider the Incar-

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[1]Rom. 8:29.
[2]Gal. 4:6.
[3]I Tim. 2:4.
[4]John 14:6.
[5]Eph. 4:12-13.

nation to be contingent on the fact of sin and the need of Atonement. Such a theory makes the Incarnation merely a scheme for repairing a defect in the execution of God's plan, a veritable *deus ex machina* brought in to restore the broken unity of the divine purpose. In that case the Incarnation is an artificial scheme, and the resulting theories of the Atonement are sure to have an artificial character. Indeed, if the fact of sin were the occasion for the supreme expression of divine love, we may well be tempted to call sin itself a blessing to humanity, and to join in the apostrophe of Richard of St. Victor, "O blessed fault, which deserved to have such and so great a Redeemer."[1] Rather, the Incarnation is the realization of God's eternal purpose to give Himself to man and to draw man to Himself. It is the expression of the divine character, and thus in regard to sin it is the Atonement, the manifestation of God's redeeming love. The Atonement *is* the Incarnation in the world of sin. Sin affects its form, but does not produce the fact.

VI

The belief in the divine-humanity of Jesus was expressed in the early Church as the doctrine of the two "natures" of Christ. That form of statement had as its background the Hellenistic rather than the Christian modes of thinking. The Christian thought found itself in contact with the Greco-Roman world, and it was forced to express itself in the terms of that world. And we have already seen that the Greek concept of God as substance rather than as moral

[1]Migne, P. L., vol. 196, col. 1003. O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem.

will did not succeed in bringing God and man, or God and the world, into unity. There was an underlying dualism, which kept them apart. And when the doctrine of the Person of Christ came to be stated in these terms it was inevitable that this dualism should appear. The two "natures" of Christ were not brought into a genuine personal unity, and the result was that the divine nature tended to crowd out or at least to overshadow the human. Nevertheless the purpose of the Church is clear in so shaping its doctrine. The heart of Christian belief was that God and man are united in Jesus Christ, and the Church did its best to maintain that belief. It tried so to state the doctrine of the two natures of Christ as to preserve both His divinity and His humanity. That it did not altogether succeed was due to the fact that it was trying to express the Christian belief in terms which were not themselves Christian, and which contained an essential element of dualism. But the fight was worthy of all honor, even though it did not issue in complete victory. It is worth while to glance, even if ever so slightly, at this contest against dualism, with this one purpose in mind, to see the Christian belief in the union of God and man in Christ seeking to express itself in terms which practically made that union impossible.

The first great foe was Gnosticism. Gnosticism was a mixed product, largely due to Eastern influences. It separated God and the world by an immeasurable distance, and filled up the gap by a series of emanations or beings or aeons which to us seem the product of the wildest fantasy. Yet this mythology was much in evidence and commanded intellectual respect. It readily absorbed certain Christian elements, and found a place for the Person of Christ in some one of the descending scale of beings between the

unknowable divine and the material universe. Here the dualistic opposition to the belief in the unity of God and man was in open form. The best that such a system could do to conceive of God and man in union was to offer a being who was neither God nor man. And that attempt aroused the fiercest hostility of the Church, until as a result Gnosticism was so overcome that to-day it is hardly known to us except by the enemies that it made.

More subtle in its attack was the doctrine of Arius. In the contest over Arianism, the important issue was expressed by the question whether there was "a time when the Son was not." Arius maintained that the Logos, the preëxistent Son, was not coeternal with God, but that there was a time before He existed. He stood at the head of all creation, but was not essentially one with God, was not "of one substance with the Father." Athanasius rightly maintained that such a theory imperiled the whole Christian faith, for it failed to bring God and man together in Christ, and thus failed to bring man into an actual relation with God.

Now the phrase "of one substance with the Father" indicates that God was thought of as "substance," rather than as moral will. The terms of thinking were Greek terms, not those of the New Testament. Nevertheless the Christian purpose in asserting that Christ was of one substance with the Father is clearly seen. That purpose was to assert the unity of God and man accomplished in Jesus Christ. Arius by separating Christ from the Father had made Christ merely a demigod, and had destroyed the whole Christian concept.

A similar inability to bring God and man together, although starting from a different point of view, is to be found in the theory of Apollinaris. Apollinaris held the

position of Athanasius, that the Son or Logos was of one substance with the Father, but he found difficulty in reconciling this belief with belief in the humanity of Jesus. He therefore denied the full humanity of Jesus, asserting that He had no human spirit, or, as we should say, no human soul, and maintaining that the place of a soul was taken by the preëxisting Son. The humanity of Jesus consisted only of His body, and into that body the Logos entered and became the indwelling soul or spirit. This thought plainly destroyed the true humanity of Jesus, and denied the genuine union of God and man in Him. And the Church, again seeking to maintain that union, formally denounced the new theory of Apollinaris as a heresy.[1]

Each of these two theories, that of Arius and that of Apollinaris, indicates the same difficulty. God and man could not come into complete union, and therefore Christ could not be regarded as at once divine and human. The Church in its condemnation of each contended against the dualism expressed by each.

This same contest against dualism was carried on by the Church in the discussion as to the two natures of Christ. The word "nature" was a physical term,[2] and did not easily lend itself to the Christian thought of God as a personal and moral Being. It was the expression of the idea of God as *substance,* and we have already seen that that idea furnished no clear distinction between God and the world, and at the same time failed to bring God and the world together. This difficulty appears in the whole discussion of the two natures of Christ. The divine nature was thought of as one thing, and the human nature as

[1] First Council of Constantinople, A. D. 381.

[2] *Φύσις.*

another thing. The problem was in terms of *things* rather than of persons. How could these two *things,* these two natures, that of God and that of man, come together? And how did they actually come together in Christ? The question was an artificial one, it was the attempt to express the Christian belief about God and man in terms that were not themselves Christian. The result was bound to be unsatisfactory. Yet the problem was inevitable, and the Church was forced to solve it as well as it could. For that purpose, it steadily resisted any attempt to deprive Christ of either of these two natures, and it insisted that the two were perfectly joined in Him. The famous formula adopted at the Council of Chalcedon was the best statement that the Church could make, and it clearly expresses the purposes and interests which the Church had in hand. It asserted that the two natures were joined in Christ "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation." The formula may seem unreal to us, but it was the only way in which the Church could express its belief under the conditions in which it was, and using the terms that it was obliged to use.

But the end was not yet, and the subsequent history shows how difficult it was to maintain a spiritual truth when expressed in physical terms. Chalcedon had declared that Christ had two natures; henceforth that was the orthodox statement, and was verbally accepted. But other questions arose, showing how imperfectly the dualism was overcome. Were these two natures equal? Might it not be that to the divine nature alone belonged the element of *will,* and that the human nature was without will, merely controlled by the divine? But that was to reduce the humanity of Christ to a mere figment, a mere name. And the Church was so deeply concerned with maintaining the

union of divine and human in Jesus that, at the third Council of Constantinople,[1] it even asserted that Christ had two wills, one divine and one human. The statement seems to us strange and confusing, it seems to split apart the Person of Christ. But the purpose of the Church was clear; it was so insistent in maintaining the humanity of Jesus that it ventured even this extreme statement, that He had two wills. Nothing could more clearly show the purpose of the Church to insist on the unity of God and man in Jesus Christ, and nothing could more clearly indicate the impossibility of giving such belief an adequate expression in physical terms. The doctrine of the two natures was the splendid attempt of Christian faith to maintain and express itself in a scheme of thought that was itself unchristian.

Not even yet was the end reached. In spite of the assertion that Christ had two natures and that each of these two natures was possessed of will, there had steadily crept in a doctrine which had gained implied recognition at the second Council of Constantinople, A. D. 553. It was the theory that only to the divine nature of Christ belonged personality, and that His human nature was impersonal. It is difficult to see how a nature that has will can be impersonal, or how an impersonal humanity can be humanity at all. In spite of the struggle of the Church, the humanity of Jesus was practically surrendered by this doctrine.[2] It was indeed essentially the revival of the heresy of Apollinaris, that Jesus had no human soul. That which had been heresy in the fourth century gradually prevailed until it became practically orthodox. Throughout the Middle

[1] A. D. 680-1.

[2] This subject is discussed more fully in the fifth chapter.

Ages the human Christ was obscured. The monophysite heresy, that Jesus had but one nature, and that that one was divine, prevailed, disguised under new forms. The belief in the living, tempted, struggling, conquering humanity of Jesus almost disappeared. He became the purely divine Being. The Church turned to the Virgin and the saints, to find in them the humanity that had been obscured in Christ.

The doctrine of the two natures of Christ must for us be reinterpreted in ethical terms. In its original form it had proved incapable of fully expressing the divine-humanity of Jesus. It was trying to express a Christian belief in terms that were not themselves Christian. So long as God was thought of as *substance,* no unity of God and man was possible. The doctrine of the two natures did all that was possible under the circumstances. It registered the purpose of the Church to hold fast to the divine-humanity of Jesus in the presence of concepts in which that belief could not find true and adequate expression.

These difficulties disappear when we turn to the moral concept of God, which is that of the New Testament. Therein the belief that was sought to be expressed in the doctrine of the two natures of Christ receives its true interpretation. In Christ is the perfect unity of God and man, the revelation, the manifestation, of God in human life. God the Father and Giver has given Himself to man in His Son. And man, the son of God, has received the fullness of the divine gift. The unity of God and man is the goal and purpose of the divine creative love, and that unity is accomplished in Jesus Christ. We see in Him the God-Man. His two natures are not two parts, two separate *things,* into which we can divide His Person. Rather they are two aspects under which Christian faith must always

regard His whole Person. *He is God giving Himself to men. He is man receiving the fullness of God.*[1]

With this ethical interpretation, the doctrine of the two natures not only expresses the deepest truth with regard to the Person of Christ, but it suggests again the double aspect under which every Christian doctrine must be regarded. The Atonement is, on the one hand, the divine love giving itself in sacrifice; it is, on the other hand, the work of the tempted, struggling, victorious Son of man, the High Priest of all humanity. The Church is, on the one hand, a divine creation, a divine gift; on the other hand, it is the fellowship of human life, imperfect, sinful, and yet struggling to manifest the fellowship with God. It is both divine and human. The Sacraments are, on the one hand, visible signs of a divine gift, on the other hand, visible marks of human fellowship. Every Christian doctrine is seeking to understand and to express, however imperfectly, the way in which the creative God gives Himself to the creatures whom He has made. And in the incarnate Christ we see God giving Himself in His fullness to man capable of receiving the fullness of God. The Word of God has become flesh.

VII

This chapter began with the assertion that Christianity is a religion of history, that is, that it regards history as of direct religious meaning and value. I considered at considerable length objections to this statement, and tried to show that the ideal elements in Christian faith can not be separated from the historic events or persons in whom those

[1]His Person is "ethisch betrachtet ganz Mensch, religiös betrachtet ganz Gott." H. Schultz, *Grundriss der Evangelischen Dogmatik*, p. 105.

ideals have found expression. I also maintained that if religion is to be not simply other-worldly, but also is to have meaning for this world, then the question whether in this world we can actually experience God becomes of the utmost religious importance. A purely idealistic attitude may conceivably prepare men for the hereafter, but if they are to be coworkers with God in His kingdom on earth, then they must know that God is indeed with them in their task. We returned then to the statement, that Christianity is a religion of history, that is, that the relation between God and man is not simply an ideal one, but one that has been realized in history in the Person of Jesus Christ. That is the Incarnation.

We then approached the idea of the Incarnation by discussing the nature of revelation. Revelation and experience are but different aspects of the same thing. If God is to be known He must be experienced or revealed. That revelation can take place partly in nature, but only partly. If God be a moral Being, He can be fully known only through life, only through moral beings. The revelation of God must be in and through the history, the life, of man. And God can be revealed in that history only if His essential nature and being are *given* in that history. We cannot know God by being told about Him, He must be experienced. And in the perfect Life which completely reveals God to man and in man, we have that union of God and man which is the goal of creation. We see in Christ the God-Man. He is the incarnate Word.

Here we come to the most important problem in Christology. Jesus Christ is the union of divine and human, which union is the very purpose of God's creative love. But then comes the question, How is the union of divine

and human in Him different from what it is in other men? That is the central problem of Christology, and must now claim our attention.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST

I

We come now to the central problem in Christology. Was Jesus Christ different from other men? If so, in what does that difference consist? Is it a difference that separates Him from us, or does it draw us to Him? Is the union of divine and human in Him different from what it is or can be in all the children of God?

The course of our previous thought has brought us directly to this problem. We are seeking to understand the divine-humanity of Jesus Christ. And the phrase "divine-humanity" has no meaning except as we attach a meaning to the words "divine" and "human." And as we are dealing with Christian theology, it is necessary that we give to those terms their Christian meaning, the meaning that they had for Christ Himself. We have seen that His teaching that God is our Father and that man is the child of God, the son of God, brings God and man into perfect unity. God as creative Love is the absolute source of all that is good and true in the life of man. God gives all and man receives all. The Christian concept of God and man leads us to the belief in the unity of God and man as the outcome and purpose of the divine creative love. And this unity is accomplished in Jesus Christ. The Incarnation is the realization in history of that divine-human

unity which is the eternal purpose of God. The Christian belief in the Incarnation is the fullest expression of the Christian belief about God and about man. The creative God, the heavenly Father, seeks to give Himself in His fullness to His children, and that gift is accomplished in the God-Man, Jesus Christ.

This brings us directly and inevitably to the problem of the uniqueness of Christ. If Jesus Christ is just the realization in history of the purpose of God with all humanity, then how is He different from other men? If the union of divine and human in Him is simply that which it is God's purpose to bring to pass in all men, then how can we speak of Christ as in any special sense divine and human? Is He the God-Man in any other way than that in which God-Humanity is the goal for all men? Is He anything more than the ideal man? If all men are sons of God, in what sense does the Apostles' Creed speak of Jesus Christ as "His only Son?" How can we retain His supremacy and at the same time find in Him the truth that holds good for all humanity?

II

While our course of thought has brought us directly to this central problem, it is also true that the problem is quite independent of the way in which it has been here approached. It is the problem of all Christian faith. For Christian faith has always regarded Jesus under a twofold aspect. He is the Incarnation of the divine Word, the Lord and Master of life, and He is also the brother of man, the ideal for all humanity.

This twofold attitude is found in our Lord's own thought as expressed in the Synoptic Gospels. He is conscious of an immediate and unique relation to the Father; yet out

of that uniqueness comes the universality of His message. That which is true for Him is to be made true for others also. To accomplish that is His vocation. He is to proclaim the kingdom of God, and to draw men into that kingdom. Therefore He is called to be the Christ, and, in that kingdom which He as the Christ proclaims, all men are to be the children of their heavenly Father.

The same twofold attitude runs through the whole New Testament. In the Pauline thought, Jesus Christ is the foundation, and other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, who is before all things, and in whom all things consist. And yet He is the firstborn among many brethren. And the time is looked for when we shall all attain unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.[1] In the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ is the very image of the divine substance. And yet He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, He was made perfect through suffering, and though He were a Son yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.[2] To St. John, Christ is the Incarnate Word, the only begotten Son. And yet He calls His followers into fellowship with Himself and with His Father. They also are to be the children of God. Those who believe in Him shall do even greater works than He has done. They are to be in Him even as He is in the Father, and whither He goes they shall go also. Through Him who comes from God they are to be exalted into that fellowship with God which is His own.[3]

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[1] I Cor. 3:11; Col. 1:15-17; Rom. 8:29; Eph. 4:13. The Epistle to the Ephesians may not have been written by St. Paul, but at any rate it belongs to the development of Pauline thought.

[2] Heb. 1:3, 8; 2:10; 4:15; 5:8.

[3] John 1:12, 14, 18; 14:12, 20; 17:21, 24. I John 1:3; 3:1.

When we turn from the New Testament to the development of the ecclesiastical doctrine, it is evident that the endeavor of the Church was to establish and maintain this twofold attitude to the Person of Christ. An endeavor it was rather than a complete success. For while, from the Council of Nicaea, the doctrine of the deity of Christ was firmly established, the belief in His complete humanity failed to secure as full and adequate recognition. Yet the purpose of the Church to maintain His full manhood is clear. In the rejection of the theory of Apollinaris (that Jesus had no human spirit or soul), in the condemnation of the Monophysite theory (that He had only one nature, the divine), in the statement that He had two wills (a human will as well as a divine), the Church fought vigorously against the suppression of His manhood. Yet the struggle was not altogether successful. In the assertion that His Personality belonged only to His divine nature, theology carried into the Middle Ages a Christ who was divine, but whose humanity was far separated from the humanity of His brethren.

This result was chiefly due to the failure to carry out fully the moral belief in God which is the belief of the New Testament. It has already been indicated that the Greek idea of God as substance, under which idea the Church was obliged to shape its theology, did not allow a full union between God and man. It must also be noted that this same idea of substance led to a concept of salvation which was not truly moral, and which therefore did not require any emphasis on the full moral humanity of Jesus Christ. God was regarded as of a certain substance or nature, and man as of a certain different substance or nature. Hence man's salvation was to consist in his receiving the divine nature, the reception of which nature conferred immor-

tality. The impartation of this gift of the divine nature or substance took place in the Incarnation. In the Incarnation God touched human nature from above, and thereby conferred the gift of salvation or immortality. For such a work, the humanity of Christ played no real part. At the most it served only as the meeting-point between God and man. The work of salvation was not really a moral work; it was only the transformation of the human, accomplished in the Incarnation and rendered effective through the Sacraments. For this purpose the Monophysite conception of Christ, as consisting only of the divine nature, really sufficed, and although Monophysitism was condemned as a heresy, yet its implications were still effective, inasmuch as the humanity of Christ was regarded as impersonal and played no vital part either in His Person or in His work. As God was not regarded as fundamentally personal, so neither the Person nor the work of Christ was regarded as fundamentally ethical, and therefore His humanity had no real significance. There was no need of the tempted, struggling, victorious Son of Man.

Of course it would be quite untrue to say that the Church did not have in mind the moral concept of God, and that it was not trying to apply it. The Church held strenuously to the belief that God is Love. The history of the Councils is largely a record of the Church's attempt to maintain its belief in the humanity of Christ as the means through which the divine love expressed itself in man's redemption. And the doctrine of the Atonement, whenever it became prominent, as in Anselm, sought to express the relation between God and man in moral terms. Nevertheless the humanity of Christ was not fully emphasized. To give it its full meaning, it was necessary to break away from the conception of God as substance, and to adhere strictly to the

belief in God as moral, as righteous will, as the loving Creator, as our heavenly Father.

Certainly such an attempt was made at the Reformation. The prominence of the doctrines of justification and of the Atonement emphasized the moral idea of God, and the moral character, the righteousness, of Christ. Hence arose a deeper sense of His humanity. Yet even here the relation between divine and human in Him was too often imperfectly expressed. His divine nature and His human nature still tended to be regarded as separate parts of His Person, as two *things,* which failed to come into genuine union. And while theology became more closely related with the Bible, yet the lack of a historical critical approach to Scripture prevented the witness of the New Testament from being fully appreciated. It was to the credit of Unitarianism that it maintained the complete humanity of Jesus. And in the presence of theories which made the human Christ unreal, in the presence of theories of predestination and of Atonement which maligned the character of God, Unitarianism had a righteous protest to make. It affirmed truths which orthodoxy had neglected to its peril. And yet, as Unitarianism failed to maintain the supremacy of Christ, and thus to ensure the religious value of His Person, the protest remained ineffective to produce a theory of His Person which could satisfy the Christian consciousness and meet the demands of Christian faith.

In all this we see the Church seeking, albeit with manifold aberrations, to maintain at once the supremacy, the divinity, and also the humanity of Jesus. And yet we see that the forms of statement, with all the value that they had under the conditions of the time, too often failed to be true to the moral concept of God, and thus too often failed to express fully the divine-humanity of Jesus Christ.

III

This twofold attitude toward the Person of Christ, found in the New Testament, and expressed, however imperfectly, in the whole course of Christian theology, is an essential element, we may well say *the* essential element, in Christian faith. Jesus Christ is Lord and Master of life. He is the supreme revelation of God, the gift of God to man, the incarnate Word. He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father. His supremacy, His deity, is at the very heart of Christian faith. And yet His deity is manifested, revealed, in the life of man. He is true Man, the only perfectly true Man. He is our Example as well as our Saviour. And if He is our Example and calls us to follow Him, there can be in Him nothing that is unattainable by man. If there were anything such, He would lose His humanity, He would no longer be our Example.

It is the task of Christian theology to maintain and to try to express as perfectly as possible this double attitude towards the Person of Christ. His supremacy must be maintained in such a way as not to separate Him by an impassable gulf from His brethren. His relation to His brethren must be so maintained as not to bring Him down to the dead level of ordinary humanity, and thus to destroy His supremacy and His power. His divinity must be expressed in His humanity, His humanity must not separate Him from His divinity. That is the problem of the Uniqueness of Christ.

No solution can be of any value that clouds either of these two aspects of His being, and especially no solution that leads to a compromise between these two sides. No denial that He has a human soul, no denial of His human personality, can meet the test. Nor can any assertion

avail that separates between His two "natures," and asserts that certain qualities belonged only to His divine, and certain other qualities only to His human nature. Such, for example, was the theory that He knew certain things "as God," but did not know them "as man." Such a theory gives us a being who is neither God nor man, and calls such a compromise a union of divine and human! Or rather, such a theory brings divine and human into parallel lines, and, revealing a dualism between them, fails to bring them into union. That is flatly to deny the Incarnation.

It is also evident that no solution can be reached so long as we abide by the category of "substance," so long as we regard God as consisting of a certain "substance," and man of a certain different "substance," and then try to effect a combination of the two. Not only does the history of doctrine, as previously traced, show the failure of such a method, but simple logic leads us to the same result. If there be in Christ some "substance," some *thing,* which is divine and which therefore cannot belong to men, then He has in Him something to which humanity can never attain, and He ceases to be our Example. On the other hand, if there be in Him only the "substance" of humanity, then He is brought down to the level of other men, and He ceases to be our Lord and Master. From that dilemma there is no escape so long as we try to state the uniqueness of Christ in terms of "substance."

One other solution has had popularity and appeals because of its simplicity. It seeks to solve the problem of divine-humanity by asserting that divine and human are identical, and that therefore there is no problem to be solved. This is the solution of pantheism. God and man are but different parts of the same reality, or, rather, all reality is God, and man is identical with God. The con-

sciousness of that identity in Jesus Christ is the Incarnation. There is no need of reconciling divine and human, for they are already the same. In one form or another "speculative" types of theology have made much use of this conception as a means of interpreting the belief in the Incarnation.

The difficulties of the pantheistic position have been dwelt upon at length in the second chapter, and it is not necessary to reopen that discussion. But it may here be suggested that the attempt to solve the problem of the divine-humanity of Jesus by saying that divine and human are just the same has another difficulty which is of fundamental importance for a theology that tries to be Christian. And the difficulty is the perfectly simple one that the belief in the identity of God and man is not the Christian belief. We are trying to express the Christian belief as to the union of God and man in Jesus Christ in terms of our own thought, in terms that correspond to our modes of thinking to-day. But if, in making this attempt, we use terms that deny the Christian belief altogether, then we are giving up the attempt. We may recognize the possibility that the Christian belief is not true. If we should be forced to that conclusion, let us frankly acknowledge it. But we have no right to translate the belief into terms that deny its essential contents, and still to maintain that we hold the same belief. The solution offered by pantheism is not a Christian solution.

It is also to be said that pantheism carried to its logical results radically destroys all moral distinctions. We have seen that the terms of our own time are essentially moral terms, that our problems are moral, social, problems. We have seen that these same moral terms are those of the New Testament. God is a moral Being whose character is love.

The relation between God and man is a moral relation. The presence of God is the presence of the moral qualities of the life of God. And morality implies, demands, difference. There is a difference between right and wrong, between good and bad, between love and hate. But pantheism in identifying God and the world logically makes everything divine, and thus undermines all moral distinctions. God is present wherever there is *being,* without regard to the quality of that being. He is present in a stone as He is in a man, in a bad man as in a good man, in Iscariot as He is in Christ. Perhaps no pantheism has ever fully faced that conclusion. But the conclusion is inevitable unless moral distinctions are introduced. And when moral distinctions are introduced, the essence of pantheism is destroyed.

The pantheistic attempt to solve the problem of divine-humanity must be definitely abandoned. It gives us no real unity, it is not the Christian solution, and it destroys moral distinctions.

We return then to the problem of the uniqueness of Christ, recognizing that the problem is at the heart of Christian faith, and that it can be solved only through strict adherence to the Christian belief about God and man. Risking repetition let me state again the conclusions which bring us directly to this problem. God as our Father is creative Love, Man as creature is the child and heir of God. God creates His children after His own image, destined to receive the fullness of His own life, to grow into the full likeness of God. The difference between God and men is a difference not in attributes, but in source. All that is true and best in man comes to him from God. The purpose of God is that man should enter into his heritage as the son of God. He is to be in perfect unity with God. The

bringing about of that unity is God's eternal purpose for man. And the accomplishment of that purpose in Christ Jesus is the Incarnation. It is on the basis of these principles that we are to try to answer in Christian terms the question, What then is the difference between Christ and other men? Only on this basis can we look for a truly Christian solution of the problem of the uniqueness of Christ.

From this point of view there are three elements in the uniqueness of Christ, each of which will add something to our thought about Him.

IV

In the first place, the unity of God and man is in Jesus Christ realized in all its fullness, while in other men it is realized only in degree. In Him God and man have perfectly met together. And as true manhood consists in union with God, He alone is perfect Man. In Him is manifest God's purpose for humanity. In Him we see man as he ought to be. He is different from other men, first, in that He is the ideal Man.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the idea of Christ as perfect man runs through all the New Testament. His own consciousness is that of perfect union with God. His sense of divine Sonship, of unity with His Father, is unclouded. He shows no self-consciousness of sin.[1] He is

[1]The only passages which might possibly seem to contradict this statement are the accounts of the baptism of Jesus, and his reply to the young ruler: "Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God." (Mark 10:18, cf. Matt. 19:17, Luke 18:19.) As to the baptism, the reply of Jesus to John as given in Matt. 3:15, "Suffer it now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," should not be pressed, as the words, not found in Mark

the Son who alone knows the Father, and He calls others to come to Him that they may find rest with God.[1] St. Paul sees in Christ the last Adam, the spiritual man, the life-giving spirit.[2] The Epistle to the Hebrews sees Christ as tempted at all points like as we are, yet without sin. Having been made perfect, He becomes the representative of true humanity, the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.[3] And Christian theology, following the New Testament, has always emphasized the thought of Christ as representing true humanity, as the ideal Man. His perfect likeness to true humanity is that which, first of all, distinguishes Him from others of the sons of God in whom that likeness is only imperfectly realized.

This thought of Jesus Christ as the ideal Man has sometimes been expressed in a false form, which deprives the Person of Christ of individual and historic meaning. His humanity has often been regarded as a sort of abstract idea of humanity in general, instead of as the revelation of God in a concrete, individual human life. Thus it has been

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or Luke, are very likely a later addition. Rather it seems probable that the baptism of Jesus indicates His taking part in a great religious and moral movement, and marks for Him the beginning of a new period of consciousness of and devotion to His life work. It cannot be taken as expressing an individual consciousness of sin and need of repentance. Rather His refusal to be baptized would have indicated an abnormal consciousness of aloofness, and a lack of simple humility and sense of religious dependence. As to the reply to the young ruler, the words denote a rejection of the easy and careless way in which the young man uses the phrase "Good Master," and indicate our Lord's consciousness of the greatness of the unfulfilled task still before Him. The general lack on our Lord's part of any personal consciousness of sin seems to make it impossible to infer such consciousness from these passages.

[1]Matt. 11:27-28, Luke 10:22.
[2]I Cor. 15:45-48.
[3]Heb. 2:17; 4:15; 5:8-10.

said that He became "man," but that He did not become "a man." His humanity is treated as impersonal, and thus His life has been deprived of genuine moral value. Such a conception is untrue to the moral aspect under which we are trying to consider the Incarnation.

In this thought, false as it is, there may be found two genuine motives, which however can be better expressed. One motive is to preserve the thought of God becoming man from being changed into the different thought of a man becoming God, to prevent the Incarnation being exchanged for an apotheosis. It is feared that if we speak of Jesus being a man, then the only way in which we can interpret His divinity is to say that a man became God, and thus to lose the religious value of the belief in the Incarnation. Yet the fear is unjustified. Certainly the Christian belief is that the divine-humanity of Jesus is the gift of God, not the achievement of humanity. Yet surely God can give Himself, His character, His love, His being, more fully in a definite historical life than in a pale abstraction of humanity in general. The belief that God gives Himself in the Person of the individual Man, Jesus of Nazareth, is not the same as the belief that a man became God. Rather, God becomes man in the individual Man, Jesus Christ.

The other motive in the above mentioned form of expression is the wish to preserve the universal significance of the Person of Christ. It is feared that, if He be regarded as an individual, He will have only a partial meaning for mankind. Thus, in denying that He was "a man" the purpose seems to be to assert that in His universal humanity His Person has universal significance. But the error lies in confusing two different kinds of universals. One sort of universal is got by a mere abstraction from all individual characteristics, thus arriving at a general idea

which is devoid of all concrete meaning. Thus we might try to get the idea of an American by conceiving an abstract American, neither white nor black nor red, neither tall nor short, neither man, woman, nor child. But such an idea tells us nothing. All meaning has gone out of it. Indeed the only absolutely universal idea of that kind, arrived at by successive abstraction of particulars, is the final, empty concept of pure "being" which Hegel justly declared to be identical with "nothing," and which he compared to the night in which all cows are black. It reduces everything to a blank identity devoid of all contents. The other kind of universal is found by taking a concrete, definite individual in whom the universal elements are vividly expressed and realized. If we want the universal American, we shall do well to find him in Abraham Lincoln. He was individual enough, one of the most individual men that ever lived, but in his individuality are found the essential elements of his country's life. Here in concrete, historical, individual form are the characteristics of the genuine American, vividly expressed and realized. We find in him the universal American far more truly than in any pale abstraction.

So it is, in far deeper sense, with the universality of Jesus Christ. We have in Him no mere abstraction of humanity in general, but the very life of God given in the concrete, historic life of man. He is the universal Man in that in Him are given the essentials of true humanity. In Him the perfect union of God and man is accomplished. The truth intended by the statement that He was not "a man" may be better expressed by saying that He was *the* Man. He is the one in whom the truth of human life in its union with God is completely realized. And therein

His Person and His work are of value and meaning for all humanity.

I recall hearing Phillips Brooks discuss the relation between the minister and other men. Should the minister be different from other men, and, if so, in what respect? He answered that the minister should be different from other men by being most a man. His calling should free him from the accidents of life, and should enable him to deal with the things that are of deepest and most essential meaning. He ought to be able to represent most fully the elements that belong to the highest life of man. Thus his difference from other men ought to bring him into the closest contact with all men. May we not say that therein alone can the minister be the true priest to his people, in that he can most fully deal with the things that are of supreme importance to all? His difference from his people brings him closest to his people. And so it is, in infinitely deeper degree, with Him who is the Priest for all humanity, the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Jesus Christ is the perfect Man. The difference between Him and other men is not in that which separates Him from men, but in that which draws Him closest to all humanity. In His perfect union of divine and human He alone is fully and completely Man.

This consideration, however, brings us only to the beginning of our search. If all that we mean by the uniqueness of Christ lies in that which constitutes Him truly man, then His supremacy is endangered. He becomes for us the moral Example, but hardly the Lord and Master of life. It seems misleading to speak of His divinity in any peculiar or unique sense. It would be ambiguous to say that the difference between Him and other men becomes only a difference of degree and not of kind, for the theory

of evolution has obscured the distinction, and it is difficult to tell exactly what is meant by it. Successive differences in degree may make a distinction so great that we speak of it as one of kind. But without using that ambiguous phrase, it seems clear that the difference we have been considering does not in itself give sufficient ground for the religious preëminence of Christ, and does not fully express the belief in His divinity.

V

We turn then to the second suggestion as to the uniqueness of Christ. And we may begin by asking the question, How is it that He is the ideal Man? What were the forces that produced Him? How out of the level of ordinary humanity does He come who transcends the limits of that humanity? And the answer of Christian faith is that we see in Jesus the direct expression of God's creative will. He is not the mere product of the race. He is the new beginning of the race. He cannot be explained as the mere outcome of human forces. In modern phrase, He is not the mere result of evolution. He is the direct gift of God to the world. As deriving His origin direct from God, He is in a unique sense the Son of God.

The whole New Testament sees in Jesus Christ one who can be understood only as the direct gift of God. While in the Synoptic Gospels there is comparatively little theological interpretation of the Person of Christ, yet He is everywhere regarded as beyond the limits of ordinary humanity. At His baptism He is declared to be God's beloved Son. As the bridegroom He is contrasted with the sons of the bridechamber. He is the dearly beloved Son as compared with the servants sent to receive the fruits of

the vineyard. He as the Son alone knows the Father. He is greater than the son of David. He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. He will come again for judgment on the clouds of heaven.[1] In the thought of St. Paul He is declared to be the Son of God with power. He is the Son whom God sent forth in the fullness of time. He is the last Adam, the second man, from heaven. His being finds its origin in the life and being of God. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. In all things He has the preëminence. He being in the form of God took the form of a servant, and through His life of obedience He has won the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue should confess that He is Lord.[2] In the Epistle to the Hebrews He is the Son through whom God made the worlds. He is above all angels, and to Him are applied the words of the psalm, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."[3] To St. John He is the incarnate Word. He is not of this world. His life on earth is the revelation of the eternal glory which He had with the Father before the

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[1]The following references will serve as examples of the Synoptic attitude: Mark 1:11, Matt. 3:17, Luke 3:22. Mark 2:6-10, Matt. 9:2-8, Luke 5:21-24. Mark 2:19, Matt. 9:15, Luke 5:34. Matt. 11:27, Luke 10:22. Mark 8:27-29, Matt. 16:13-17, Luke 9:18-20. Mark 9:7, Matt. 17:5, Luke 9:35. Matt. 14:33; 16:27. Mark 12:2-8, Matt. 21:34-39, Luke 20:10-15. Mark 12:35-37, Matt. 22:41-45, Luke 20:41-44. Mark 14:62, Matt. 26:64, Luke 22:69-71. Matt. 28:17.

[2]See e. g. Rom. 1:4, Gal. 4:4, I Cor. 15:45-47, Col. 1:15-19, Phil. 2:6-11.

[3]Heb. chap. 1.

world was.[1] Through the whole New Testament He is regarded as one whose life and being can be explained only as the direct outcome of the life and being of God.

It should be emphasized that this thought of the divine origin of Jesus is not to be limited to or identified with the belief in the Virgin Birth of Jesus. The belief in the divine origin of Jesus is found through the New Testament as a whole, and it is indeed most strongly emphasized by those writers who show no knowledge of the Virgin Birth, namely St. Paul, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and St. John. It would therefore run contrary to the whole New Testament to maintain that this belief was identical with that of the Virgin Birth, and would weaken the whole position which we have been maintaining. The theological meaning underlying the stories of the Birth of Jesus is probably essentially the same as the thought which we have been considering. The belief that Jesus was of divine origin, that He was the direct gift of the creative Spirit of God, found one expression in the belief in the Virgin Birth. But while the narratives in the early chapters of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke are distinctly Hebraic in character and go back to a very early period, they form no part of the common basis of the Synoptic Gospels, and are attended with peculiar critical difficulties. To identify the two beliefs, that of the divine origin of Jesus and that of the Virgin Birth, or to hold that the latter is absolutely essential to the former, is to be wise above that which is written. It makes the belief in the Incarnation dependent on what is critically the weakest part of the New Testament, and it surrounds the belief in the Incarnation with difficulties that are very serious to

[1] John 1:1-18; 6:62; 8:23, 42, 58; 17:5; 20:28; I John 1:1-2.

many honest and sincere men who are in sympathy with modern thought. Each belief should stand by itself, and should be investigated on its own merits. But the two are not the same, and to make them such is to be untrue to the New Testament, and to cast stumbling blocks in the way of faith. The belief in the divine origin of Jesus is found throughout the New Testament as a whole, and it is not necessarily dependent on the belief in the Virgin Birth.[1]

It need hardly be said that Christian faith, following the New Testament, has always regarded Jesus Christ as one whose origin cannot be found in human forces alone. The world cannot account for Him, history cannot explain Him. He is the direct product of God's creative will. He is the miracle of human history.

This word "miracle," which I here deliberately use, calls us to pause and consider carefully its meaning. It may be said that, as I am trying to express the belief in Christ in terms of present day thought, I have been untrue to that attempt when I use the word miracle. For the word, suggesting as it does an irregular and capricious interruption of those processes of nature which we call laws, seems a peculiarly offensive one for modern thought. Our age is one of science. And has not science unveiled the majestic spectacle of the uniformity of nature's laws? Has the modern man any place for the miracle?

Certainly not, if by miracle we mean a lawless, unregulated, as it were an accidental, element in reality. And if miracle can mean only that, then the word must go. It is not worth while fighting for a word if that word is linked with implications which are no longer admissible. But there is another aspect of modern thought, indeed another

[1] I have treated the subject of the relation of the Virgin Birth to the Creed in my book *The Apostles' Creed To-day*, pp. 88-101.

aspect of science itself, which may give us a different point of view. Grant that science has revealed with ever increasing clearness the uniformity, the regularity, of nature's actions. But, also, science by means of that uniformity has been ever increasingly able to use nature for the purposes of man. Through the uniformity of nature science has made nature produce results that are far from uniform. The last century has been an age of science, but it has also been an age of wonders, we may well say an age of miracles. Man's intelligence and will have produced through nature that which nature itself was powerless to produce.

Take a simple example. An aeroplane is built in strictest relation to nature's laws. Only through that strict relation can it be depended on to do its work. And yet the aeroplane does that which nature left alone could never do. To the course of nature alone it is a miracle, that is, it is a revelation of a higher law, the law of personality. In it nature has become obedient to man. The intelligence and purpose of man have through strict obedience to nature's laws made nature itself obedient to a higher law. Through nature is brought forth that which is above nature, that which testifies to the higher reality, the life of man.

May we not similarly regard God's relation to the world? If by a miracle we mean that God by an arbitrary fiat sets aside His regular ways of working, and contradicts the orderly method of nature's laws, then the belief in miracle cannot easily be held to-day. But if by a miracle we mean that God so uses the world that in it He may express and reveal His own purpose and will, then what we call a miracle will be no breaking of law, but will be the revelation of a higher law of the personal God. And when we say that the supreme miracle of the world's history is Jesus

Christ, we shall mean that in Christ God's purpose for the world has found its highest and most complete expression. Jesus Christ is above the world, He is that which the world itself never could produce. We see in Him the highest expression of the creative power of God. But that creative power is no arbitrary or disorderly act. God has always been seeking to give Himself in the life of man. And when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son. But that sending forth is the culmination of God's ordered plan. History, if it could be read aright, if it could be read in the light of God's eternal purpose, would all be seen to be prophetic of the Christ. Every true human hope and aspiration is fulfilled in Him. Every imperfection of man cries out for Him who is the perfect realization of humanity. Without Him history is but a torso. He is the desire of all nations. He "was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake."[1] As the miracle of history He alone makes history intelligible. As the new creation of God He is the fulfillment of God's creative purpose which was from the beginning of the world.

Let the word miracle go, if you will. I seek but to make clear the thought that Jesus Christ cannot be accounted for by human forces, that He is the direct new creation of God, and that in Him history finds its culmination and its goal.[2]

[1] I Peter 1:20.

[2] The statement that Jesus Christ is the direct creation of God is of course not intended to apply to the eternal Son or Logos, declared in the Nicene Creed to be "begotten, not made." The Logos belongs to the eternal life of God (See chapter III.). The supreme expression of the activity of the Logos is given in Jesus Christ, who is the archetype of the new man, and who becomes the source of a new humanity. (Cf. I Cor. 15:45-47, 2 Cor. 5:17, Col. 3:10.) The relation between the Logos and the Person of Jesus is discussed in the fifth chapter.

It may be objected, Is not every man in some sense a new creation of God? Is there not truth in the old theory of Creationism, namely, that the soul of each man is a new creation, versus the theory of Traducianism, namely, that every man, soul as well as body, is but the product of his ancestors? Does not every man born into the world have individual elements which cannot be reduced merely to his inheritance? May it not be said by every man, as Rousseau said of himself, "When nature made me she broke the mould?" May we not translate Rousseau's saying into Christian terms, and hold that every child of God is a new expression of the divine creative will of our heavenly Father? And if so, does not this consideration do away with the uniqueness of the divine origin of our Lord?

In answer it may be said that, as believers in God, we will naturally recognize in every human being the creative hand of God. But that fact does not reduce the Person of Jesus to the level of ordinary humanity. And just for the reason that He in the completeness of His manhood, in His perfect union of divine and human, is different from and above others of the sons of men. That is to say, this second suggestion as to the uniqueness of Christ must be regarded in connection with our first suggestion. It is just because of the uniqueness of His Person that we see in Him a unique act of God's creative power. God is always Creator, and creation is a constant process. From the time when the creative Word first brought order out of confusion and light out of darkness, God has been leading His creation to ever higher levels. And when the supreme result is reached, the perfect union of God and man in the God-Man Jesus Christ, there God's creative will finds its most complete expression. We find the meaning and the purpose of the world in Him in whom the creative Word became

flesh. And in the uniqueness of His Person we see the uniqueness of a new and creative act of God.

Another and a more fundamental objection may now be made. Granted that we have in Jesus Christ a unique union of divine and human, granted that we can account for that union only through a unique act of creation, still the question remains, Will His uniqueness be eternal? He has been unique in the past, He is unique in the present. How about the future? Is He not our Example? And does not that fact imply that we may become like Him? Are we not called on to attain "unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ?" Is not the union of divine and human in Him the ideal and goal for all humanity? And when that goal is reached by others, will not His uniqueness disappear? Will He not become simply the firstborn among many brethren, first in time, but no longer first in preëminence?

VI

We are thus brought to the third and most important consideration in regard to the uniqueness of Christ. The fundamental difference between Christ and other men lies in His power to create a new humanity in His image, after His likeness. If we ever get to be *like* Him, it will be *through* Him. Christ is the creative source of Christlikeness. The nearer we attain to Him, the more fully shall we know His unique power to make us so to attain. His divine Sonship brings to us also the power to become sons of God. In theological language He is the Son of God "by nature," while we are the sons of God "by adoption and

grace," the adoption and grace that come through Him.[1] He is the foundation on which we may build, and "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."[2] He is the Creator and Founder of the kingdom of God.

This factor I believe to be of fundamental importance in regard to the uniqueness of Christ. It demands careful consideration. And it is especially necessary to emphasize its connection with the Christian belief about God and man and the relation between God and man. If we fully appreciate this connection, we shall see in this consideration the deepest expression of the belief in the deity of Christ.

The difference between Christ and other men does not consist in His having certain qualities or attributes to which we can never attain. In that case He would be unhuman, and would cease to be our Example. What He has is of value to us only because He gives it to us. What He is is of value to us only because through Him we can become as He is. Christ is the creative source of Christ-likeness. The difference between Him and other men lies not in attributes but in the source of those attributes.

But this is just the difference between God and men. We must return to our treatment of the idea of God as we considered it in the second chapter. We saw that the Christian belief in God presumed the Old Testament belief

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[1]That all men are sons of God "by nature" in the sense that they are sons of God in their true essential being, that divine sonship is the birthright of all men, is undoubtedly true. It is a truth too often neglected by theology, and strongly emphasized by Frederick W. Robertson and by Phillips Brooks. But in their actual, "natural" condition, the divine sonship is undeveloped and unrealized, and needs to be quickened into full reality by the power of Christ. The latter is the sense intended in the text.

[2]I Cor. 3:11.

in God as Creator. That belief brought God into closest relation with man, a far closer relation than when the belief in creation was lacking. The pantheistic identity of God and man brought about only a pseudo-relation between them, and in reality prevented any closeness of approach. Man could come near to God only by giving up that which belongs to his own personal, individual life. The Hebrew religion on the contrary conceived of God and man pre-ëminently in moral terms, and brought the creative God into living and personal relation with His creatures. The Greek idea that the gods were jealous of men found no place in a belief that gave God the eminence of creative power.

All this thought we saw to be carried out in its fullness in our Lord's teaching that God is our Father. The belief in divine Fatherhood is the belief in creatorship completely moralized, carried over fully into the moral and spiritual sphere. God as Father is the absolute source of all that is best in the life of man. Man as son of God can receive all that God can give. And yet God is always Creator and Father, man is always creature and child. There is no confusion between God and man.

To Christian thought the difference between God and man consists not in "attributes," but in source. God out of His infinite love creates men in His image, He gives to them the fullness of His own life. But he alone is the source and origin of that fullness. He alone has "aseity." He is from Himself, we are from Him. All that we have and are we owe to Him. The one and only and ineradicable difference between God and man is that of source. With that difference kept clear, all other differences fall away, or become differences only in degree. God remains

supreme, and His supremacy is manifest in the creative power of His love.

Now it is just this difference which Christian faith finds between Christ and other men. He creates humanity anew after His likeness. He is God incarnate, God manifested in the flesh. His Deity is in that creative power which is the essence of Deity. That which distinguishes Him from other men is just that which distinguishes God from men. That which exalts Christ above men, at the same time draws men to Him. His uniqueness is the uniqueness of God, the power to create after His own image. Therein He is the incarnate Word, perfectly revealing the creative mind and will of God. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father.[1]

There are two objections that may be made to this third suggestion as to the uniqueness of Christ. First, it may be said that all men have creative power. Does not man's freedom mean his ability to create? And in so far as any man has in him the life of God, does he not have something of God's creative power? Does this suggestion really distinguish Christ from other children of God?

The answer is that this thought of the creative power of Christ must be taken in connection with the two preceding suggestions as to His uniqueness. The first one was that in Him the union of God and man is perfectly realized. Through that union He is the perfect, the ideal Man. Now it is in virtue of that uniqueness that He has unique creative power, the power to create perfect manhood. The uniqueness of His creative power is the result of the

[1] John 1:18; 14:9.

uniqueness of His Person. And the second suggestion was that we see in Christ the gift of God, a new creation, the direct outcome of God's creative will. He is unique in His direct origin from God. But that same uniqueness marks the uniqueness of His creative power. His power comes direct from God, our power comes through Him, the Son of God. Thus these three suggestions stand together. He is unique in His own perfect being, unique in His origin, and His uniqueness is supremely expressed in His power to create men after His likeness.

The second objection is as follows. Grant that no other man has realized the fullness of humanity as did Jesus Christ. Grant that all men, so far as we know, are therefore dependent on Him for their highest life. Still, may not someone, sometime, somewhere, arise who will achieve perfection apart from Christ? Can we deny such a possibility? And if not, does not the possibility destroy His uniqueness?

The answer is that in that case there would be a new Incarnation. As an abstract possibility, we cannot deny that God might, apart from the course of history which has been affected by Christ, give Himself again fully in a new life. We can no more deny such a possibility than we can deny the possibility of an Incarnation on some other planet. But not thus do we understand the ways of God as He has revealed Himself in the history of this world. History is not cut up into utterly separate parts. Human life is one, and we may well believe that God deals with it as one. We believe that Jesus Christ and humanity remade in Him are the goal of history. The supposition of a new and separate Incarnation has for us no religious meaning. We may dismiss it as an academic fancy. It need cast no doubt on the Christian belief that Jesus Christ is the light

of the world. And, understanding the Christian salvation in no narrow sense, but as meaning the fullness of our life with God, we may say with confidence that "in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved,"[1] save only the Name of the one Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

This uniqueness of the creative Christ is eternal. It can never be set aside by others becoming like Him, for that likeness must be accomplished *through* Him, and will therefore be the witness to His supremacy. We may become like Christ, but we shall not ourselves become Christs, for the very meaning of the Christ is that He can create us in His likeness. The completion of that creation will be the final witness to the preëminence of our Creator. If the supreme miracle should ever be accomplished, and I, a sinful man, be made over in perfect likeness to my Lord, then first should I fully appreciate and reverence the supremacy of Him who could accomplish so great a work. The more Christlike we become the more shall we worship the creative Christ. When the saints in heaven shall gain the perfect victory, then shall they take the crowns from their heads and cast them before the throne of the Lamb.

Thus the attitude of man to the creative Christ, as to the creative God, is that of absolute humility and of perfect boldness. Of absolute humility, for we owe all to Him as our Master. Of perfect boldness, because the Master calls us not servants but friends. He gives to us of His own fullness, and in the joy of that gift we walk with Him boldly and unafraid.

Here we have the supreme expression of that principle

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[1]Acts 4:12.

of Christian belief on which I have before dwelt. The truth of God becomes true for men who are the sons and heirs of God. God gives Himself to men. And the complete expression of that gift is in Jesus Christ and in humanity remade after His image. God has given Himself in His Son that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. "If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?"[1]

It need hardly be said that herein lies the very essence of the Christian Church. Get rid of all the narrow and partisan associations which disfigure the name of the Church of Christ. In the broadest sense, the Church is humanity remade after the image of the Christ. The Church is the Bride of Christ, rejoicing in the fullness of His love. The Church is the Body of Christ, manifesting the power of His Spirit. It is the outward and visible sign, the Sacrament, of the kingdom of God. It can never put itself in the place of Christ, for it knows Him always as its Lord and Master, it derives its power from Him. But it does derive that power from Him and from His creative Love, and in the confidence of that Love it goes on conquering and to conquer, knowing that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

We may sum up briefly the three considerations which, on the basis of the Christian belief about God and man, express the uniqueness of Christ. In the first place, He is unique in that He is the expression of the complete union of God and man, in which union true humanity consists. Secondly, He is unique in that we see in Him no mere product of the race, but the direct gift of God to man.

[1]Rom. 8:29-32.

And, thirdly, He is eternally unique in that He is the Master of Life, the creative power to shape us after His likeness, the Creator and Builder of the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER V

THE INCARNATE LIFE

We now turn to the bearing of our previous discussion on certain problems which concern the historic Person of Jesus Christ. We considered in the first chapter the necessity of interpreting the Incarnation in the terms of our present thought, and we saw that those terms are essentially moral terms, which are also those of the New Testament. In the second chapter, we came to the result that the moral concept of God and of man leads to the complete union of God and man. Divine-humanity is the goal of God's creative love. In the third chapter we considered the Incarnation as the realization of the goal in Jesus Christ. The fourth chapter dealt with the uniqueness of Christ, as the One in whom that unity is perfectly accomplished, in whom we see the direct creative act of God, and who, as the Creator of a new humanity after His own likeness, becomes eternally the unique Lord and Master of Life.

We turn now to the application of these results to our interpretation of the Person of Jesus, to the way in which the unity of God and man is accomplished in Him, and to the problems of His knowledge and of His character.

I

Now if in this discussion we hold fast to the belief in God as a moral Being, and to His union with man as a

moral union, we are, I believe, led to one fundamental result of much importance. The Incarnation, as the historical actualization of the moral unity of God and man, cannot be regarded as an event taking place in a moment of time. It is a moral process which concerns the whole life of Jesus. The unity of God and man in Him is not accomplished in a momentary act. It is accomplished in the moral development and growth and completion of His divine-human Personality. The union is a personal union, and personality is the outcome of moral growth. The Incarnation as the moral and personal union of divine and human can take place only through a process of moral and personal development. The Incarnation concerns the whole life of Jesus.

The Incarnation is often, perhaps generally, regarded as a momentary event identical with the conception or the birth of Jesus. Such an idea is perfectly logical if the Incarnation be a physical event, the giving of a new "substance" or "nature" to humanity. This idea of substance was, as we have seen, a leading idea in Greek thought, and it found its way into Christian theology from Greek sources. The result was that the Incarnation was too often interpreted in physical instead of in moral terms. And thus it could easily be identified with the conception or the birth of Jesus. This same thought logically led to a similarly physical concept of the Church and of the Sacraments. Through the impartation of a divine substance in the Incarnation, the Church becomes a new physical organism, depending for its continuance on a tactual connection with and succession from its source. The Sacraments become means through which a physically conceived "grace," regarded as a substance, a *thing,* is conveyed. Salvation comes through the reception of this physical and

life-giving substance, and hence there is no salvation outside the Church. The thought is that of the impartation of a divine substance through the Incarnation, and the whole process tends to become formal and mechanical, even magical, in its nature. Such a thought is perfectly logical if the Incarnation is regarded as primarily a physical event, taking place in a moment of time.

The true Christian thought must be that of a moral process and a moral power. If God be a moral Being and if man be truly the child of God, then the union of God and man, and the consequence of that union must be expressed in moral terms. The Incarnation is not a physical event, but a moral and spiritual union. And a moral and spiritual union must take place in the form of a moral and spiritual process. For moral realities can take place only in time and in the form of growth. The Incarnation covers the whole life of Jesus, His growth, His temptation, His victory.

All morality implies growth. And that growth must be not the result of physical necessity, but must be the expression of the free spirit. A moral event cannot be produced all at once by force. Not even omnipotence can create by a mere fiat a righteous man, for omnipotence does not imply moral contradictions. A righteous man must be produced through growth into righteousness. God might produce a physically full-grown man, and might give to him every good impulse and disposition. But he would be only an imitation of a truly good man. His righteousness would not be real righteousness unless it had grown, his character would not be real character unless it were the outcome of a free process. God can no more make offhand a righteous man than He can make offhand a man thirty years old. For a man to be thirty years old, thirty

years must have elapsed, and for a man to be a righteous man, the process of development must lie behind his righteousness.

So it must be with the Incarnation, if the Incarnation be the expression of the moral God in the moral life of man. It must itself take place in the form of morality, that is, of growth. The Incarnation is identical with the whole life and development of the divine-humanity of Jesus. And that development must have moral meaning and moral value. We must see the Incarnation being accomplished in Him who increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man, who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, who though He was a Son yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and, having been made perfect became unto all them that obey Him the Author of eternal salvation.[1] As we now recognize that the Atonement cannot be confined to the death of Christ, but must be expressed in His whole life of obedience, finding its consummation in and giving its meaning to the cross, so must the Incarnation not be limited to His birth, but must concern His whole life of temptation and struggle and victory. In the whole development of the Person of Jesus we see the process of the Incarnate Life.[2]

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[1]Luke 2:52. Heb. 4:15; 5:8-9.

[2]The phrase is suggested by the title of Dr. Henry S. Nash's book on the Atonement, *The Atoning Life*. The idea of the Incarnation as a growth, I believe I first owe to I. A. Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine*, Eng. Trans. vol. iii, pp. 32ff. I have previously treated this subject in an article in *The Harvard Theological Review*, vol. VII, No. 4, "The Growth of the Incarnation," and I acknowledge with thanks permission to make use here of certain parts of that article.

II

We may look at the subject in a somewhat different way. In the third chapter I discussed the Incarnation from the point of view of revelation. There we saw that men's ideas of revelation have varied in accordance with their ideas of God. If God be regarded as impersonal, as the mere underlying essence of all reality, then He can be revealed in *things*. But if God be personal, moral, then He can be revealed only through moral beings, through persons. Thus the Christian belief holds that God is revealed in life, in history. All life in some degree reveals God, and the full revelation can come only in the perfect Life. In the life of Jesus the Word of God, the revelation, the message, of God, has become flesh. All human life is to some degree an utterance of the Word of God. In Him in whom the Word of God became flesh, there is the summing up of all which human life had imperfectly revealed of God. The course of human history is a preparation for the incarnate Word, is, we may say, a partial incarnation of the Word. In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, and the Word became flesh in the perfect Life.

Now that which is true of the development of human life as a whole, through which the Word is partly revealed, holds true also of the growth of Him in whom the Word finds full expression. God's Word can be expressed in a life in proportion as that life reaches completeness. In Jesus we see the growth of the perfect Life which ever more and more completely reveals God. The union of God's Word, God's Logos, with humanity is a moral union, and that moral union can take place only through moral growth. The life of Jesus is perfect in that each stage is perfect in its kind, is perfect in the degree possible for that

stage. At birth there can be given only the conditions which make possible a perfect development. In the Child there is revealed that which is possible for the child. And as the life develops through temptation and struggle, made perfect through suffering, there is ever more completely accomplished the union of divine and human. In the final struggle of the cross the victory is won, the Incarnate Life is complete, and the seal of that completeness is revealed in the risen and ascended Lord. In the whole life of temptation and struggle and victory we see the process and development of the Incarnate Life.

The thought may be expressed in still another way, and I risk redundancy for the sake of clearness. The Incarnation expressed in moral terms is the Incarnation of the divine *character*. There is no *thing* in God which can become incarnate, for God is not a *thing*. He is a moral Being, and if He is to be revealed He must be revealed in that which is of the essence of His being. That essence is love, character. He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father, for He has seen the character of the Father, and character is the deepest thing that we know or can know about God. To see God in Christ is to see the divine love and righteousness and truth perfectly expressed in the life that reveals God.

As previously maintained in the first chapter we are not to suppose that an Incarnation expressed in moral terms, as the Incarnation of the divine character, is anything less than an Incarnation of the divine *being*. If it be true that the essence of God is love, then love, and not some abstract concept of reality, is itself the very being of God. And if we see in Christ the divine character we see in Him the very reality of the divine life. The Incarnation of the

divine character is the Incarnation of that which is the deepest reality of God.

It follows that, if the character of Jesus Christ is the supreme revelation of God, then the character of Christ must be true moral character. It cannot be produced by force, nor can it be the necessary result of a native endowment. It must be the outcome of a moral process. And as that process becomes more complete, so is God more perfectly revealed. The indwelling of God, the Incarnation of God, becomes ever more complete until the perfect end in the victory of the cross. And in the resurrection and the ascension the Victor is evermore at one with the Father. The Incarnation is accomplished. God and man are perfectly united. The gospel of the Incarnation is the story of the Incarnate Life.

It is important to avoid an essential misunderstanding. This thought is not that of a man who becoming perfect is therefore taken up into the life of God. That would be to substitute a man becoming God for God becoming man, to put an apotheosis in place of the Incarnation. It would lose the religious value of the Person of Christ, and would make of Him at most a moral example. But the thought is not that He grows into a perfect man and is then united with God. Christian faith sees in Jesus not first the ascent of humanity to God, but first the gift of God to humanity. It is not that a human person grows to perfection independently of union with God. It is rather that the union of divine and human constitutes the essential Person of Jesus. But that union takes place gradually, and as it becomes ever more complete, so does His Person grow to its full realization. The Incarnation is no less an Incarnation because it takes the form of growth.

This thought gives greater meaning and value to the

whole life of Jesus. It is not as though certain parts of His life alone had meaning. His birth, His temptation, His crucifixion, His resurrection, His ascension are not isolated events. They receive their meaning from His life as a whole. The birth is the beginning of a process that is completed only in His perfect life. The cross is the summing up of a process that began at birth. The resurrection and the ascension are the eternal results of the life that has won the perfect victory. These events have their meaning and value not in themselves but as the outcome and expression of His whole life. They are the crises which derive their meaning from the process of which they are the result. They are Mounts of Transfiguration, high points of His divine-human experience, sacramental expressions of the unity of God and man which through His whole life was ever becoming more perfectly realized. They are the Sacraments of the Incarnate Life.

This thought gives added meaning to the life of every follower of Christ who would walk in the footsteps of his Master. Through Him we are to win union with God. His incarnate life is the source of that divine-humanity which is to be accomplished in us through His example and His power. And that achievement is the daily task of the Christian life. We are to make His experience our own. Day by day we are to follow in the path He trod. And this thought gives added meaning and value to the Church Year. It is the sign and symbol of the daily Christian life in its following of the Master. From Advent to Ascension we are to bear within our hearts the birth, the dying, and the rising of our Lord. These events are the expression of that perfect Life which was manifested that we might have life and that we might have it abundantly.

III

The concept of the Incarnation as a moral process provides the best way to approach the problems of our Lord's knowledge and of His righteousness. To identify the Incarnation with His conception or birth is to heap up difficulties, and to deprive His life of its genuinely human qualities. To regard His Incarnation as the gradual development of a moral process is to enable us to see His knowledge as progressive, and to regard His righteousness as the outcome of the struggle and temptation which alone can make that righteousness real.

In regard to our Lord's knowledge, it is natural that some persons should feel a shrinking at the problem, and that to them the discussion should seem irreverent, a too curious prying into the mind of Him who is our Lord and Master. In reply there are two things to be said. In the first place, the problem is squarely put before us by the New Testament. It needs only an unbiased reading of the Gospels to realize that the limitations in the knowledge of our Lord are plainly indicated. If we are to study the New Testament we cannot evade the problem. And in the second place, if Christ be truly our Lord and Master, and if He is to be our guide, it is above all necessary that we should understand Him and what He thought. The supreme guide for the Christian is "the mind of Christ."[1] And we cannot understand the mind of Christ unless we try reverently to see Him as He truly was. He is the Truth, and He should be truly known. The problem is not the result of irreverent curiosity, but is the outcome of a regard for the New Testament and of a reverence for Christ Himself.

[1] I Cor. 2:16.

It hardly seems necessary to-day to argue that our Lord was not omniscient. The older theory that He must if divine have known all things even from the cradle came from a false concept of the Incarnation, indeed from a real denial of the Incarnation. For the belief in the Incarnation is the belief that God has actually been manifested in human life. And He is not so manifested if that life when it receives the divine ceases to be human in its conditions. The belief in the omniscience of Jesus was the outcome of the dualism which held that God and man could not be perfectly united, and which therefore found it necessary to do away with the conditions of humanity in order that humanity might receive God. But if we really believe in the Incarnation, if we believe that God can be and has been manifested in human life, then we shall get rid of the antagonism. We shall believe that God can be manifested under genuinely human conditions, and we shall not begin with a presupposition which prevents us from reading the New Testament as it stands, and which dehumanizes the Christ. We shall ask fairly the question, What was the nature of His knowledge, and what were its limitations?

As to the New Testament witness to those limitations, the matter has been so thoroughly studied that little need here be said. St. Luke says that He "advanced in wisdom."[1] He is represented as acquiring knowledge. He asks for information. And in one passage which even the most radical criticism maintains to be an authentic saying of our Lord, He declares of His coming again, "But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."[2] To suppose that He was possessed of omniscience is to disregard the

[1] Luke 2:52.
[2] Mark 13:32, Matt. 24:36.

witness of the New Testament and to be wise above that which is written.[1]

One unsatisfactory attempt to explain the limitations of our Lord's knowledge has often been made by reference to His two "natures," by holding that in His divine nature He was possessed of omniscience, while His human nature had human limitations. Thus it is maintained that He knew certain things "as God" which He was ignorant of "as man." When He expressed ignorance, He referred only to His human nature. But the theory is artificial and full of difficulties. It separates the personality of Jesus into two parallel lines, really making of Him two separate persons. Such a theory virtually denies the Incarnation, in that it denies a real union of divine and human. The union is at most a spatial one, merely the union of two different lines of consciousness under the outward form of a bodily person. Substantially this view was the heresy ascribed to Nestorius and condemned at the Council of Ephesus. And entirely aside from its condemnation at that somewhat irregular and decidedly disorderly Council, it merits condemnation by any one who believes in a real Incarnation of God in Jesus.

Even more important are the moral difficulties involved. To suppose that our Lord could deliberately say that He was ignorant of that which was at the same within His divine consciousness is to reflect on His moral integrity. And to suppose that we can defend that mode of speech on His part by explaining that He knew "as God" what He was ignorant of "as man" is to class Him with those casuists who defend "mental reservation." Such an ex-

[1]For a careful study of the New Testament facts, rendered more impressive by the cautious conservatism of the writer, see Arthur James Mason, *The Conditions of Our Lord's Life on Earth.*

planation cannot be tolerated by any one who wishes to maintain either the divine-humanity or the moral integrity of Jesus.

IV

Of more importance in modern theology as an explanation of the limits of our Lord's knowledge has been the theory of the "Kenosis," namely that our Lord, the second Person of the Trinity, in the Incarnation voluntarily laid aside, "emptied Himself" of, His divine attributes, including His omniscience, and assumed the limitations of humanity. Thus as Man He lived a life of humility and obedience, and, having become obedient even to the death of the cross, was exalted to His former position of glory. The word "Kenosis" is of course taken from the Greek of Philippians 2:7,[1] and this whole passage is given as the chief exegetical support for the theory.

Unquestionably this theory has a sound purpose. It makes an honest attempt to face the facts as to the limitations of our Lord's knowledge indicated in the Gospels, and to do so without recourse to the artificial distinction between His knowledge "as God" and "as man." Nevertheless the theory has fundamental difficulties. These difficulties all concern the question as to what is meant by the preëxistence of Christ. I have several times touched upon this subject in my criticism of the theory that our Lord's humanity was impersonal. But the subject is of great importance, and requires a fuller treatment. It is directly brought before us by the theory of the Kenosis.

The preëxistence of the Logos, the Word, the divine side of our Lord's nature, the eternal Christ if we will use that

[1] ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν.

expression, is an essential part of the Christian belief in the Incarnation. The Logos belongs to the eternal life of God, partly revealed in all history, and perfectly incarnate in Jesus Christ. But Jesus Christ Himself is not only divine. He is the union of divine and human. His personality cannot be expressed in terms of either divine or human alone. Its very essence consists in the union of divine and human. That union constitutes His unique personality, that of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Son of God and the Son of Man.

Now the doctrine of the Kenosis confuses these two things, the preëxistence of the divine Logos or divine nature of Christ with the preëxistence of the total divine-human personality, that of the God-Man, Jesus Christ. It thinks of Jesus of Nazareth in His total personality as preëxisting in heaven, and then simply coming to earth. But that coming to earth adds nothing to His personal character or life. Such a conception brings us into serious difficulties both in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity and in regard to the doctrine of the divine-humanity of Jesus Christ.

As regards the doctrine of the Trinity, this theory conceives of the three "Persons," "Personae," "Hypostases," of the Trinity as though each one represented a separate, individual "person" in our modern sense of the word, as though there were three *people* in the being of God. And then it supposes that the second of these "Persons" voluntarily relinquishes His heavenly attributes, comes to earth, and passes through a human experience, as the result of which He is reinstated in possession of the attributes which He had relinquished. Such a view leads to a belief in the Trinity as essentially tritheistic, as consisting practically in three gods. It is hardly necessary to speak of the additional difficulties which result as to the trinitarian life of

God and its continuance during the period of the Incarnation. The whole conception expresses a view of the Trinity which is utterly out of accord with the New Testament belief in the unity of God, and which is a departure from the original meaning and purpose of the word "person" in its Trinitarian sense.

Of equal importance are the difficulties which this theory involves as to the Person of Christ. In making His total personality preëxistent it leaves for His humanity no place except as the form under which He appears on earth. His only self is that of the Logos. Here we have again essentially the old heresy of Apollinaris, that our Lord had no human soul or spirit, that its place was taken by the Logos. I have already traced in the third chapter the opposition of the Church to this heresy, and the way in which the Church contended for the genuine humanity of Jesus. And we have already there noted how under the influence of Greek thought the humanity of Christ became gradually less and less emphasized, until finally the doctrine that His humanity was impersonal attained a certain quasi orthodoxy. But this was no less than the reappearance of the teaching of Apollinaris, or of its later form in the monophysite heresy that Our Lord had no human nature. For a human nature without personality is no more a genuine human nature than is human nature without a soul or spirit. The doctrine that His humanity played no part in His personal life should be abandoned by any one who wishes to believe in a true and complete Incarnation, in a real union of divine and human. And with the abandonment of this doctrine it should be recognized that the preëxistence of

Christ applies to His divine nature, to the Logos, and not to the total personality of Jesus of Nazareth.[1]

From the point of view of the Trinity as consisting of three separate egos, one of which simply comes to earth in Jesus Christ, there are just three possible ways of interpreting the Person of Christ. There is, first, the open monophysite declaration that He had no human nature. His omniscience is implied, and His humanity becomes a mere appearance. Or, secondly, there is assumed that in Him there is a separate human personality, which coexists with His divine self. This theory separates Him into two

[1]It is interesting to see how the doctrine of the *ἀνυποστασία* or lack of personality, of the human nature of our Lord, is treated by some modern writers. Bishop Gore somewhat half-heartedly defends it in a note. "The truth which the phrase 'Christ's impersonal manhood' is intended to guard, is that the humanity which our Lord assumed had no *independent* personality. It found its personality in the Son who assumed it. But as assumed by Him it was most truly personal." (*The Incarnation of the Son of God.* Note 34, p. 279. Italics in text.) Notice the distinction between "Him" and "it." The *Him* belongs entirely to the preëxistent Son. The *it* applies to His humanity.

Somewhat similarly writes Dr. Francis J. Hall: "The impersonality, *ἀνυποστασία*, ascribed to the Manhood of Christ by catholic writers had reference to that Manhood considered apart from the divine Person who assumed it, and gave it being by assuming it. It [notice throughout the "it"] is truly personal, but its personality is that of the Eternal Word—not a separate ego, other than His. . . . . The Manhood of Christ never had any other personal subject or self than God the Son; and this interior relation of the Manhood to the second Person of the Godhead, is called *ἐνυποστασία*. The two terms, *ἀνυποστασία* and *ἐνυποστασία*, require to be taken together, if we would avoid misunderstanding their application." (*The Incarnation*, pp. 134-5.) Evidently the Eternal Word has "a separate ego," distinct from the ego of the Father and that of the Holy Spirit, and this ego forms the total personality of Jesus. Can He then be said to have in any real sense a human soul or spirit? And does not this whole point of view imply essentially a tritheistic interpretation of the Trinity?

distinct persons, and is the heresy condemned as that of Nestorius. Or, thirdly, there is the theory of the Kenosis, which we have been considering. Of these three possibilities, the third is doubtless the best. But the fundamental difficulty remains. The Trinity is regarded in tritheistic terms, and the humanity of Jesus is not real.

The view of the Incarnation which I am maintaining avoids these difficulties. It holds that the personality of Jesus Christ is formed by the complete union of the divine Logos or Word with humanity. Thus His personality is both divine and human. It cannot be interpreted in either divine or human terms alone. We cannot ascribe to the Logos a complete and separate personality apart from the one personality of the Trinitarian God. Therefore the preëxistence of Christ is that of the divine Logos and not that of the total divine-human personality of Jesus.

V

Now comes a problem which it would be unfair for me to shirk, and which calls for careful consideration. Does the New Testament teach a preëxistence only of the Logos, of the divine side or "nature" of Christ, or does it also teach a preëxistence of the total personality of Jesus Christ? Is not the latter thought found in the fourth Gospel, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in the writings of St. Paul, not only in the Kenosis passage but in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, as well as elsewhere? The answer to this question should be given on the basis of simple exegesis, the honest attempt to find the meaning of the writers. We have no right to let our theology be the guide to the understanding of the New Testament. Exegesis has been too often

strained for the purpose of buttressing one's own theology, whether orthodox or liberal. And as a matter of exegesis I am led to conclude that the New Testament writers do not sharply draw the distinction that I have made between the eternal element or essence in the being of Jesus and His total personality, and that the latter is often thought of as preëxistent, that Jesus is sometimes regarded as a preëxistent Man who comes to earth from a heavenly habitation. But when it is attempted to make this thought an essential part of our theology to-day, and to let it lead to what is for us virtually a tritheistic concept of God and a non-human Christ, there are considerations which must make us pause.

In the first place it may well be noted that in the Kenosis passage in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, St. Paul is dealing primarily with ethical admonitions rather than with theological or metaphysical theories. "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." It is the humility of Christ as shown in the Incarnation and in the cross which St. Paul is setting forth as an example to men. So also in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians where he says of Christ "that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor,"[1] the writer is thinking of the Incarnation as an act of sacrifice which should arouse the Churches to liberal giving for their poorer brethren. To take these passages in which the leading thought is that of love manifested in sacrifice and to make them the basis for the elaborate metaphysical theory of the Kenosis is to run a risk of misinterpreting the writer's thought. Thus, Wordsworth writes:—

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:

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[1] II Cor. 8:9.

The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

If we should interpret these words as though they were a philosophical statement of the theory of the preëxistence of souls, we should misinterpret Wordsworth's thought. He himself in a note says that the idea "is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith, as more than an element in our instincts of immortality," that he used it "as a poet." So with St. Paul we must be on our guard lest we stretch a form of expression used in enforcing a moral truth further than was intended by the writer. Still this caution by no means alters the fact that the idea of preëxistence and that probably of the total personality of Jesus is in the mind of St. Paul as well as of other writers of the New Testament.

Secondly, we must, therefore, take note of the fact that the idea of preëxistence was in New Testament times a familiar one both to Jewish and to Hellenistic thought, and that it played a very different part from that which it plays in our thinking to-day. It was characteristic of the time to ascribe preëxistence to any reality which had divine meaning and value. The Jewish Apocalyptic literature is full of examples of this tendency, and it is frequently reflected in the New Testament. The Epistle to the Hebrews thinks of the earthly tabernacle as made according to the pattern of a preëxisting heavenly reality.[1] St. Paul con-

[1] Heb. 8:5. Cf. Exodus 25:40.

trasts "the Jerusalem that now is" with "the Jerusalem that is above."[1] And the seer of the Apocalypse sees "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God."[2] Also Greek thought was conversant with the world of eternal Ideas where preëxisted the earthly realities. Both in Jewish and in Hellenistic thought the idea of preëxistence is readily applied to that which has divine meaning and value.

Now the New Testament sees in Jesus Christ the direct gift of God to humanity, the very life and being of God. His Person is of abiding significance and value, as He admits us into the life of God. This thought is expressed by St. John in that he sees in Christ the divine Logos incarnate, and the Logos belongs to the essential life of God Himself. And the same thought, although not the same form of expression, is found in St. Paul and in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Now it was inevitable that, with the prevailing idea of preëxistence, this belief in the deity of Christ and in the presence in Him of the eternal Logos, should take the form of the preëxistence of His total personality. In that form of expression no distinction is drawn between the divine and human elements of His Person. But this thought does not imply, as it would for us, a division of "persons," in our modern sense, in the being of God, nor a denial of the genuine humanity of Jesus. So to make use of it is to be untrue to the New Testament itself.

The essential content of the New Testament thought seems to me, then, to be this:—first, the preëxistence in the life of God of the eternal Logos or Word, the creative and

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[1]Gal. 4:25-26.

[2]Rev. 21:2.

revealing principle of the life of God, that which theology knows as the second Person of the Trinity; and, secondly, the deity and the abiding significance and value of the Person of Jesus Christ, in whom the Word became flesh. But for our thinking, in which preëxistence plays such a different part from that which it did in New Testament times, the preëxistence of Christ means the preëxistence of the divine Logos, and not that of the total personality of Jesus of Nazareth. But with this result disappears the entire basis for the doctrine of the Kenosis as a voluntary renunciation on the part of the second Person of the Trinity. We must look elsewhere for an explanation of our Lord's human life.

VI

We can approach the problem of our Lord's knowledge far more simply from the point of view of the Incarnation as a development. We shall see the whole life of Jesus as a growth, and we shall be able to understand St. Luke's saying that He "advanced in wisdom and stature." He grows in body, in mind, and in spirit, and in each respect His growth is genuine. The life of God is the overruling and controlling source of the life of Jesus. But that life of God enters into Him as His own life develops, its entering in is indeed the source of that development. Thus as to His knowledge we have no need to assume any omniscience, or any knowledge that is beyond the limits of a perfectly normal human life. He learns as a child, in all worldly matters His knowledge is that of His experience and that of His time. We shall not look to Him for infallibility in matters of science or of history. But we shall look to Him for that knowledge of God which comes to a life whose

unclouded source is God Himself. And that knowledge of God is ever more perfectly received as Jesus the Son of God enters into ever more perfect unity with the Father. His knowledge grows as the unity of God and man in Him becomes ever more complete. When that perfect union is accomplished, then are the limitations of knowledge done away. It is written even of us that then shall we know even as we have been known.[1] And for Him the fullness of knowledge is the result of the fullness of the incarnate life. We shall not look for omniscience until that perfect union is accomplished.

Does such a view weaken or destroy the moral and spiritual authority of our Lord? Two things are to be said in reply. In the first place, we must remember that His was the perfectly righteous life, unclouded by sin. And sin is that which, coming between God and man, keeps us from the knowledge of God. We know little of the limits of knowledge belonging to a life without sin. And in Jesus we have the perfect life whose constant source is the very life of God Himself. Thus He is the supreme possessor of moral and spiritual insight. No moral or spiritual error could have entered a life whose source was the eternal and revealing Word of God. His knowledge was progressive, there were things He did not know. But so long as the relation with the Father was the overshadowing and undisturbed source of His knowledge, so long could there have been no place for moral or spiritual error. Such error comes from sin. In Him who knew no sin we find perfectly revealed the divine character and the divine will. To Him in whom were given the very mind and heart of God we go with confidence as to our guide into the life of God. He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father.

[1] I Cor. 13:12.

Secondly, we must ask ourselves, What kind of an authority are we looking for in Christ? We find in Him the revelation of God. But how does that revelation come, and what kind of a revelation are we seeking? Do we seek from Him a system of theological doctrines, a series of verbal statements which will convey to us accurate ideas of God? Surely if such had been the divine purpose, Jesus would have written down or dictated the truths which He wished to teach. Surely God would have provided some means by which that record would have been preserved for us without alteration, and beyond any shadow of question. Such a record we do not have. We have only a few words coming down to us in the language which Jesus spoke, and the Greek translations of his teaching come to us in different forms, brought from varied sources, the origin of which presents still a not perfectly solved problem. If we look to our Lord for such a collection of accurate theological statements, we shall indeed be disappointed. May it not be a mark of divine Providence that we do not have any such infallible record, any such perfectly authenticated account of the exact words, the *ipsissima verba,* of our Lord? If we had such, might we not be greatly tempted to linger by the *words* and so to fail to perceive the *Word?* For the Word of God does not consist of sentences. No mere verbal statements can show us God. The Word of God is Life, the perfect Life which reveals God. That Life, perfectly setting forth the divine will and the divine mind, is the constant guide to the follower of Christ. In Jesus He finds God.

The limitations of our Lord's knowledge form a difficulty for us only if we look to Him for that which it was not God's purpose that He should give. But if we look to Him not for mere theological statements, which can never

reveal God, but for the very life and being of God in the life of man, then we shall find Him the supreme Master and Guide. We shall see in Him God manifest in the flesh.

To such a thought of Jesus as revealing the will and character of God, the limitations of His knowledge are not an obstacle. Rather, without such limitations, we could not find in Him the truly righteous character. For true righteousness must be worked out in temptation and struggle, and there could be no real temptation and struggle for one who was omniscient, and for whom therefore there could be no place for the life of prayer and of faith. There could have been no value in the cross if it had presented no problem, if it had made no demand for a victory of faith. If everything had lain clear before Him, absolutely known and foreseen in all its details, then the cross would have been only the endurance of a few hours' suffering, instead of being the victory of the faith that overcame the world. Only through the limitations of knowledge which belong to genuine human life could He have been made perfect through suffering, could He have achieved the perfect righteousness.

VII

Thus from the problem of His knowledge we are brought to the problem of His character. How was His perfect righteousness achieved, and what was its relation to struggle and temptation?

So long as the Incarnation is regarded as a momentary event, identical with conception or birth, so long is it needless and even impossible to regard the temptation of Jesus as real. The inability to sin, the *non posse peccare,* is the

only logical statement concerning Him who from His birth is identical with God. Thus many theologians have denied that Jesus could really be tempted, or, at any rate, tempted by sin. His character is determined by His native endowment.

Such a theory gives us at most a sinless Christ. It does not give us a Christ of actual righteousness. For sinlessness is a negative quality, and may be due to the absence of temptation. A stick or a stone is sinless. But righteousness is more than sinlessness, and demands a growth which shall be real, which shall be made perfect through suffering, in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.[1] Instead of the sinlessness of Christ, I prefer, therefore, the larger phrase, His perfect righteousness.

It is more advantageous, even from an apologetic point of view, to deal first with the idea of Christ's perfect righteousness, rather than first with the idea of His sinlessness. For sinlessness is a negative term, and to prove a negation is always the hardest task, it requires a knowledge of every possible contingency. To prove the sinlessness of Christ to one who does not already believe in Him, demands that we should have an exhaustive knowledge of the details of His life. Such knowledge we do not have. But what we do have in Him is a positive righteousness which sets a new standard for the righteousness of the world. It is not as though, without Him, we could construct a standard of righteousness, and then, condescendingly applying it to Him, assert that He comes up to our standard, and that therefore He is sinless! It is rather that in Him we find a new ideal of righteousness, infinitely greater than that which we could have formed without Him. We do not

[1] Heb. 2:10; 4:15.

judge Him, He judges us. All judgment is committed unto Him because He is the Son of man. He is the new standard, the new ideal, for human life. And that standard at once includes sinlessness and is more than sinlessness. We are to deal not with the negative sinlessness, but with the positive and perfect righteousness of Christ.

It is in the idea of the Incarnation as a growth that we find the possibility of such a positive righteousness. In His native endowment we find that which makes such a righteousness possible. But for its actual realization, growing and yet with each stage perfect in its growth, we must turn to His development in the midst of struggle and temptation.

But, then, of course it may be asked, How could He be tempted if His life was perfect at every stage? Is not temptation due to the sin which doth so easily beset us? Would there be temptation in a perfect life? Thus it has been maintained that the perfection of His character rules out the possibility of temptation.

Such a view not only flatly contradicts the New Testament but it also deprives the Person of Christ of moral and spiritual power. He is removed from such struggle as we have to endure, and His life becomes without moral significance for us. And it is not difficult to point out the fallacy of the theory which leads to such a result.

In the first place, this theory confuses temptation with sin. But temptation is a good, for it is necessary to the development of the moral life. And whatever is necessary for morality is not sin. It was the Spirit by which Jesus was driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.[1] Sin is the yielding to temptation, righteousness is the re-

[1]Mark 1:12-13, Matt. 4:1, Luke 4:1-2

sisting of it. The tree of the guilty knowledge of good and evil, the tree of temptation, to eat which is to die, stands in the midst of the garden of the moral life. Without it, the garden would indeed be a garden of animals. It is false logic to confuse temptation with sin.

Secondly, this theory confuses a moral process with a moral result. It is indeed true that to a perfected character temptation ceases to appeal. But such a result is the outcome of a moral process. At every stage in that process there must be the temptation without which that final result could not be reached. And if the final victory of our Lord over temptation be a moral victory, it must be due to struggle against temptation, by which struggle He was made perfect.

But now comes the difficulty. In our own imperfect and sinful lives we never meet with temptation which is not affected by our sins and failures. It is hard for us to conceive what temptation would be in a life apart from sin. How could the sinless Jesus have known any temptation and struggle comparable to our own?

Doubtless we cannot completely answer the question. In the perfect life there will always be mystery which we cannot fully understand. But there is one consideration that should help us in our search, and which should enable us to see Jesus Himself, rather than our own ideas, as the solution of the problem. We do not have to ask the question, What would be the perfect character in a perfect world? To try to answer would be to carry us into the field of unreal abstractions. But that is not the question presented to us by the temptation of Jesus. He was the perfect character, but He did not live in a perfect world. We have to deal with the concrete, historical question, What *was* the perfect character in the world of sin? And therein

we are called on to try to understand Jesus as He was. In the relation between His own righteousness and human sin we should be able to find the secret of His temptation.

For it is only righteousness that can fully perceive the depth and the horror of sin. It is psychologically true that only differences are perceived. So long as we are immersed in sin, so long are we unconscious of its true nature. It is only when we begin to emerge from it, or when we feel the presence of a power opposed to it, that we begin to perceive the fact of sin itself. And to the perfect character of Jesus the sin and evil of the world were known as they could be known only by righteousness. And the question is, How was His righteousness maintained and preserved in the presence of the world of sin?

It is certainly clear that righteousness cannot be won by turning the back to sin and trying to escape from it. Sin and righteousness are not spatially bounded. No man can say, "Sin is there, and I am here, free from its presence and its power." The more perfect a man is, the more fully must he feel the fact of sin, and the more fully must he feel his own duty and responsibility concerning it. There is no righteousness but missionary righteousness; a selfish righteousness is a contradiction in terms. To flee to the desert and there to seek for righteousness is to turn away from the only road on which righteousness is to be found. The righteousness of the righteous man is found only in his saving relation to the sin of the world.

Thus we find two ideals of righteousness in the New Testament. The one is that of the Pharisee, the very word meaning "separatist." The Pharisee tries to win righteousness by keeping apart from sin. He thanks God that he is "not as other men are," and it is a short step to thank God that other men are not as good as he is. Sin is re-

garded almost in spatial terms. It can exist there, while I am free from it here. The Pharisaic ideal led to the seeking of righteousness in selfish seclusion.

The other ideal is that of the righteousness of Christ. His righteousness drives Him into contact with the sinful world. He abhorred sin, and *therefore* He was the friend of sinners. Simon the Pharisee said of Him, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is which toucheth him, that she is a sinner."[1] Simon could not conceive that just *because* Jesus knew her sin, therefore His life must touch her life. His own righteousness could not hold Him back from sin. His own purity could be preserved only if it became a purifying power to the world. St. Paul deeply interprets the mind of Christ when, in strong paradox, he says that Him who knew no sin God made to be sin on our behalf.[2] His perfection could be won only by making Himself to be sin for others, only by regarding their sin as though it were His own. Only by bearing the burden of others' sin can He tread the way of righteousness.

Can we not see here the temptation of His life, the temptation that only a perfect life could fully know? It was the temptation to seek righteousness in some other way than through the saving and cleansing contact with sin, a contact which was the means of cleansing others and the only means by which His own life could be kept clean. When the Pharisee heard the cry "Unclean," he kept himself aloof. But Jesus touched alike the physical and the moral leper. His own cleanness could be achieved only by touching the life of the unclean. Because He knew no sin,

[1]Luke 7:39.

[2]II Cor. 5:21.

He must indeed be made sin for us. What must that fact have meant to Him whose inner life was perfectly pure, who felt the horror of sin most fully because of His own perfection? Must He not often have echoed the wish of the Psalmist, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! Then would I fly away and be at rest?" But not so can He do His task and win His righteousness. His wearied feet must walk the crowded streets of the sinful city until finally they tread the way of the cross.

The perfect life does not mean freedom from temptation. It means temptation harder than we can ever know. Perfection is tempted more than imperfection, for it makes its own temptation. Only the perfect life can know the horror of contact with sin, the contact without which perfection itself cannot be attained. The righteous Christ must bear others' burdens, until, making them His own, He conquers in the fight for His own righteousness and for the righteousness of the world.

VIII

In the conflict between these two ideals of righteousness we see the conflict between the two ideals of what it was to be the Christ. As the Christ, Jesus is called to be the founder of the kingdom of God. What are the forces by which that kingdom is to be established and by which it is to do its work? They are not physical forces. To command that stones be made bread, to trust in divine power for support against material downfall, to bow the knee to Satan in compromise with worldly power, these seem to be the way of strength. But not so is the Christ called to walk. He must tread the path that leads to human failure, He must walk the way of the cross. The leader of the

Twelve brings before Him the temptation of His life: "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumblingblock unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men."[1] The divine way is the way of sacrificing love, the way that to man's judgment seems so weak. And that way must be trod by faith and not by sight. "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."[2] And the end is the cross, a human failure and a divine victory. Therein is the Christ made perfect through suffering, therein does He achieve His perfect righteousness. In the victory of the cross the way of God becomes perfectly manifested in Him who revealed God to men, who brought God and man together in the Incarnate Life.

And that incarnate life becomes through Christ the true principle of the life of man. The perfect righteousness of Christ, achieved in sacrifice, becomes the creative source of a new world. Through Christ the kingdom of God is established, and the law of that kingdom is sacrificing love. The supreme powers of the kingdom of God, the powers for which the Church of Christ is to stand, are not physical powers. They are stronger than armies and battleships, for they are the powers of God Himself. The Church of Christ has day by day to meet the temptation of the Master, the temptation to rely on any other powers than the powers of righteousness and truth and love. And if it is to win the victory it must win it through the lesson of the cross, it must win the victory of the faith that overcame the world.

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[1]Matt. 16:22-23, Mark 8:32-33.

[2]Matt. 26:39, Mark 14:36, Luke 22:42.

The Person of Jesus will always be infinitely deeper than we can understand. But this we know: in Him we see God in human life. And if we are sure that in Him we see God manifested, we shall not be afraid to see the Man. We shall see Him in the limitations of His knowledge and in His struggle against His temptation. Only thus can the divine enter the human. And in those limitations and in that struggle "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."[1] In those limitations we see the victory of faith, in that struggle we see the perfect righteousness. In Him who "advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men" we see the presence and the power of the Incarnate Life.

[1] II Cor. 5:19.

E N D

INDEX

Absolute, the, 40 note.
Anhypostasia, 98, 146f.
Anselm, 107.
Apollinaris, 37, 95f, 146.
Apologetics, 37.
Apotheosis versus Incarnation, 115, 139.
Aquinas, 14.
Arius, 95.
Arnold, Edwin, 47 note.
Arnold, Matthew, 81.
Aseity, 61, 64 note, 66.
Athanasius, 14.
Atonement, 33f, 93, 100, 107f, 136.
Attributes of God, 58f.
Augustine, 14.

Baptism of Jesus, 113 note.
Brooks, Phillips, 117, 126 note.

Calvin, 14.
"Christ" and "Jesus", 70.
Christ, twofold attitude to Person of, 104ff.
Church, 34f, 100, 131, 134.
Church year, value of, 140.
Coleridge, S. T., 15.
Coulanges, Fustel de, 26 note.
Councils, General, Niceaa, 106.
I Constantinople, 96.
Ephesus, 143.
Chalcedon, 97.
III Constantinople, 98.
Creation and evolution, 43.
Creative power of Christ, 125ff.
Creator, 41ff, 51ff, 66.
Criticism, historical, 41.

Deity of Christ, 126ff.
Democracy, 18f, 35f, 37.
Difference between Christ and other men, 126ff.
Difference between God and man, 57ff, 66.
Divine-humanity, meaning of terms, 39ff, 66, 86, 103.
Dorner, I. A., 136.
Dualism, 94ff, 96f.

Eleatic School, 46f.

Fatherhood of God, 30, 37, 49ff.
Fulfilment of prophecy, 52.

Gnosticism, 94f.
God-Man, meaning of terms, see "divine-humanity."
Gore, Charles, 147 note.
Greco-Roman thought, 40, 65, 93ff.

Hall, F. J., 147 note.
Hebrew and Greek Thought, difference between, 44.
Hegel, 40, 70, 116.
Highpriesthood of Christ, 114, 117.
Historic Christ, the, 72ff.
History and revelation, 76.
History, Christianity a religion of, 68ff.
History, God manifest in, 77.
History, meaning of, 75, 100.
Holy Spirit, fellowship of, 32.
Homoousion, 24.

Humanity of Christ, 40, 65, 96ff, 106ff.
Humility, 62ff.

Ideal manhood of Christ, 113ff.
Ideas and history, 71ff.
Immanence of God, 64, 66.
Impersonality of human nature of Christ. See "Anhypostasia."
Incarnation, a moral and spiritual process, 133ff.
Incarnation, growth of, 133ff.
Incarnation, the, essential to humanity, 92f.
Incarnation, physical concept of, 134.
Incarnation, preparation for, 86ff.
India, religion of, 76.
Inspiration, 15.

James, William, 64 note.
Jealousy of the gods, 45, 61.

Kenosis, theory of, 144ff.
Kingdom of God, 21, 126, 131ff, 161.
Knowledge, our Lord's, 141ff. progressive, 152-155.

Lessing, 69.
Logos and human history, 90ff.
Logos, St. John's doctrine of, preparation for in Hebrew and Greek thought, 87ff; relation to St. Paul and Epistle to Hebrews, 89ff.
Luther, 14.

Man, divine sonship of, 56f.
Martineau, James, 75 note.
Mason, A. J., 143.
Metaphysics, 22-24.
Miracle, 121ff.
Monophysitism, 106f, 147.

Nash, H. S., 48, 136 note.
"Natural religion", 80.
Nature religious, 26.
Nature, revelation through, 80f.
Natures, two, of Christ, 93-100, 110, 143.
Nestorius, 143.
Nicene theology, 24.

Old Testament, idea of God, 20, 27f, 41ff, 82.
Old Testament, jealousy of God, 45ff.
Old Testament, meaning of history to, 76.
Old Testament, nearness of God, 43f.
Old Testament, priest and prophet, 27f.

Pantheism, 44, 46ff, 61, 65, 66, 81, 110ff, 127.
Parker, Theodore, 69f.
Past, attitude to, 14.
Paternalism, 49.
Pfleiderer, O., 26 note.
Polytheism, 44ff, 66.
Preëxistence, in New Testament thought, 148ff; in Jewish and Hellenistic thought, 150f.
Preëxistence of Christ, 144-152.

Reformation, the, 108.
Religion and history, 74, 101.
Religion and morality, 25ff, 38; Christian relation between, 31.
Revelation, 78ff, 137, and Incarnation, 85f, 101.
Richard of St. Victor, 93.
Righteousness of Christ, 156ff.
Robertson, F. W., 126 note.
Rousseau, 124.

Sacraments, 35, 100, 107, 134.
Schultz, H., 100.
Science and miracle, 121ff.
Sin and temptation, 157ff.
Sinlessness of Christ, 113ff.
Skinner, John, 42 note.
Social problem, 17, 20.
Sonship of Christ, 53.
"Speculative" theology, 40 note, 70, 111.
Strauss, David, 69.
Substance, idea, of, applied to God, 20, 24, 66, 81, 93-95, 99, 106ff, 110, 134.

Taboo, 26.
Temptation of Jesus, 155ff.
Theology, a basic principle of, 25, 32, 35f, 38, 92.
Theology and ethics, 32f.
Theology, task of, 13, 36.
Transcendence of God, 64, 67.
Trinity, 35, 145ff.

Uniqueness of Christ, 103ff.
Unitarianism, 69f, 108.
Universality of Jesus, 116.
Universality of the Gospel, Jesus and Paul, 54ff.
Universals, two kinds of, 115.

Virgin Birth, 120ff.

Will of Christ, human, 96f, 106.
Wordsworth on preëxistence, 149f.

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